University of Alberta

Government Funding and Provincial Sport Organizations: Institutional Mechanisms and the Relationship Between the Alberta Sports, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation's Association Development Program Grant and Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations

by

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A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

Edmonton, Alberta
Fall of 2006

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Your file Votre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-22151-8
Our file Notre référence
ISBN: 978-0-494-22151-8

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the institutional mechanisms generated from the Associations Development Program Grant (ADPG) supplied by the government funding agency Alberta Sports, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF) to Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations (APSOs). Three institutional mechanisms explored in this thesis are coercive pressure, mimetic mechanisms, and normative mechanisms, which all impact an organization's operations and programs. These institutional mechanisms were explored through data gathered from interviews with APSO and Sport and Recreation Branch (SRB) employees. The data collection process, the criteria and reporting requirements imposed by the ASRPWF, the geographic locations of the APSOs, and the implementation of Brown Bag lunch seminars are three factors that contribute to the presence of the three institutional mechanisms. Using institutional theory as a theoretical framework, these factors and their impact on APSOs are discussed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

During the past two years, a number of individuals have helped make it possible for me to complete my master's thesis. First, I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Raepple and Mary Raepple for their support. Their tireless efforts have helped me through this process. When I encountered highs and lows during this project, you were always there for me – no matter what time of day it was – and I thank you for that.

Second, to my partner, Krystal Chapman: You have stuck with me and supported me through many tough times, and I cannot express enough how much that means to me. Also, I would also like to thank you for the numerous nights that you read my thesis and expressed your comments on the work. This thesis was truly a daunting task at some points, and your understanding and patience are greatly appreciated.

The third individual I would like to thank is Dr. Daniel Mason. You took me on as a student and enhanced my knowledge of the research process. Your tireless efforts are much appreciated, and the skills that you have provided me with have helped prepare me for future endeavors in the field of sport management research' and for that I thank you. To my supervisory committee: Dr. Gary Smith, Dr. Marvin Washington, Dr. David Deephouse and Professor Tom Hinch. The time you have invested in assisting me is greatly appreciated.

I would like to acknowledge the Alberta Gaming Research Institute for their financial support for the last two years. I would also like to thank the participants (APSO employees and the Sport and Recreation Branch staff); this research would not have been possible without your participation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Bob Edwards, Peggy Edwards, Jim Edwards, and Patricia Edwards for your support.

Finally, I would like to thank the following individuals: Ian Reade, Ernie Buist, and Lisa Bavington. You all have taken time to support me and read my thesis and have provided me with valuable feedback. You have been a great sounding board for when I encountered problems, and I thank you for that. I would like to thank everyone who has helped me through this process; I truly could have not completed this project without your help. Thank you.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADPG	Associations Development Program Grant
AGLC	Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission
ANSOs	Amateur Nonprofit Sport Organizations
APSO	Alberta Provincial Sport Organization
ASRPWF	Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation
NSO	National Sport Organizations
PPC	Percy Page Centre
PSOs	Provincial Sport Organization
SRB	Sport and Recreation Branch
VSC	Volunteer Sport Club

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Canadian governments (i.e. Federal, Provincial, and Municipal) are a source of financial support for the operations and programs of most Amateur Nonprofit Sport Organizations (ANSO) (Sport Canada, May 24, 2002). Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations (APSOs) are specific examples of a type of ANSO that the Government of Alberta supports financially. This support enables APSOs to supply services to the organization's members, which can include individual athletes, teams, coaches, volunteers, officials, and other organizations. Furthermore, the regulatory nature (i.e. financial assistance) of the relationship between the APSOs and the Government of Alberta creates a situation by which the APSOs are dependent on financial support. The source of support and level of dependency varies from one APSO to another.

Some examples of different types of financial support include annual government funding, membership fees, corporate sponsorship, and other government grants. The annual funding that APSOs receive from the Government of Alberta takes the form of a grant called the Associations Development Program Grant (ADPG). This research explores the impact this grant has on APSOs.

APSOs and Gaming and Lottery Revenues

Provincial Sport Organizations (PSOs) are "volunteered managed entities that form an intermediary link between community sport organizations and national sport organizations" (Ontario Government, n.date, p.1) that seek to improve the lives of

Albertans and create strong leaders within communities (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-g). There are currently 78 APSOs[1] (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-g) recognized by the Government of Alberta that service athletes, coaches, officials in different sports or aspects of sport (i.e. medical treatments, or gender equality in sport). A list of APSOs recognized by the Government of Alberta can be found in Appendix A. Public gaming[2] and lottery revenues are used by the government of Alberta to provide financial support to all 78 APSOs (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-g).

Gaming activity consists of two categories: charitable gaming and provincial lotteries. Charitable gaming provides an opportunity for nonprofit charitable organizations to raise funds by assisting or conducting bingos, casinos, raffles, and 50/50 draws. The Alberta Gaming Ministry controls direct gaming proceeds, and licenses are distributed to Alberta nonprofit organizations (including sport) through an application process. Casinos generate between $70,000 to $80,000 or more for each nonprofit organization they are involved with; however, it can take some time for nonprofits to receive this revenue. For example, the wait time is between 22 to 26 months for each organization to affiliate with a casino in Edmonton, Alberta. Charitable gaming is an inconsistent source of revenue for APSOs, in contrast to provincial lottery funds, which provide a constant source of revenue for APSOs (Edwards, Reade, Mason, Smith, & Thibault, 2004).

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[1] See Appendix A for a list of APSOs recognized by the Government of Alberta.

[2] Governments' use the term "gaming" for the purpose of softening the negative perceptions associated with gambling. Gaming implies more of an acceptable status and legal justification whereas the term gambling is associated with illicit, addictive, and dangerous activity. Essentially, these two terms are identical in meaning; therefore, gambling or gaming is defined as the participants engaging in an uncertain game of chance or stakes by betting or wagering on the game (Smith, Wynne, & Hartnagel, 2003).

Provincial lottery revenue is generated by from Video Lottery Terminals (VLTs), lottery ticket sales, and slot machines. In 2005/2006, the Government of Alberta projected the revenue generated by the provincial lotteries to exceed $1.207 billion (Alberta Government, n.date-a). The Government of Canada authorizes the government of Alberta to conduct and manage the provincial lotteries within their own province (Alberta Government, n.date-a). Public gaming and lottery revenues are controlled by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC) and administered to the APSOs through a funding agency called the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF). The ASRPWF, through the Sport and Recreation Branch (SRB) of the Government of Alberta, administers an annual amount of funding to all 78 APSOs, which is a consistent source of revenue for these APSOs. A more detailed description of the history of gaming and a structural overview of the gaming industry in Alberta can be found in Appendix B of this thesis.

Institutional Theory in this Research Context

Management literature has used institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001) to explain the impact of institutional mechanisms on financially dependent organizations. The presence of these mechanisms within an organization's environment can reduce the variance of organizational features between a population of organizations. This reduction occurs by affecting the operations and programs of an organization. While institutional mechanisms can be intentionally applied, in many cases the management of an organization is unaware that these mechanisms have an impact on their organization. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggested the factors that create these mechanisms can be

considered as norms with an organization's environment, and therefore have influence on the operations and programs of an organization. The literature on institutional theory will be discussed further in the chapter on Theoretical Framework.

Purpose of Proposed Study and Benefits

The purpose of this research is to identify and explore the factors that create institutional mechanisms, which is based on the annual funding arrangements between Alberta's Amateur Provincial Sport Organizations (APSOs) and the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks & Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF). To begin the research I developed four overarching research questions:

- What factors related to the ASRPWF funding arrangement can lead to the presence of institutional mechanisms in an APSO's environment?
- Which specific institutional mechanisms are created by the ASRPWF?
- How do the APSOs respond to the presence of these institutional mechanisms?
- What are the practical and theoretical implications of identifying the presence of institutional mechanisms within an APSO's environment?

The results of this research benefit the managers of amateur sport organizations by providing them with awareness of the institutional mechanisms that exist and the impact these mechanisms have their organization receiving government funding. Sport managers can then develop strategies to ensure their organization's operations are being run efficiently[3] and effectively[4] in the presence of these mechanisms. Furthermore, this

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[3] Efficiency is defined as the input of resources in comparison to the achievement of goals (Chernikov, 2005; Crompton, 1999).

[4] Effectiveness of an organization is defined by the achievement of meeting the goals and objectives of the organization (Chernikov, 2005; Crompton, 1999).

research benefits the academic area of sport management by adding to the literature on Canada's sport system and more specifically, on the provincial sport system.

The following chapter (i.e. chapter two) establishes the theoretical framework and provides a description of the three types of institutional process mechanisms. The method used to conduct this research is reviewed in chapter three. The findings are then presented in chapter four, and are discussed further in chapter five by applying institutional theory. The thesis concludes with suggestions for future directions for research in the area of provincial amateur sport organizations.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Organization and institution are two concepts that will be used throughout this thesis and are the primary concepts associated with institutional theory. An organization is "a group of two or more people working together to achieve a common set of goals" (Pride, Hughes, Kapoor, & Canzer, 1999, p.189). In addition, organizations are "generally understood to be systems of coordinated and controlled activities that arise when work is embedded in complex networks of technical relations and boundary-spanning exchanges" (Meyer & Rowan, 1977, p.340). Selznick (1957) described an organization as having formal rules and objectives. These rules and objectives establish the tasks of staff, the hierarchy of power, and the procedures of the organization, and can dictate how an organization operates and functions.

Within the context of this study, examples of organizations are Alberta Provincial Sport Organizations (APSOs) and the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF), both of which must follow formal rules (i.e. policies, and/or procedures), and objectives (i.e. The Foundation Act) set out by the Government of Alberta. These rules ultimately affect the operations and programs of an organization.

An institution, as described by Selznick (1957), is a "natural product of social needs and pressure – a responsive, adaptive organism" (p.5). Furthermore, institutions are said to "affect organizations through regulation" (Leblebici, Salanick, Copay, & King, 1991, p.335). These regulations are norms that are taken for granted by the organization (Leblebici et al., 1991). An institution "represents a social order or pattern that has

attained a certain state or property" (Jepperson, 1991, p.145). Through this representation, Jepperson (1991) categorized institutions in two ways: 1) a *physical entity* (i.e. academic institution); or 2) a *process*. In the context of this research, the institution is categorized as a process[5] through which APSOs receive financial support from the ASRPWF.

Institutional Environment

A nonprofit organization's environment can be described as an institutional environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Scott, 2001). Scott and Meyer (1983) stated that an institutional environment is "characterized by the elaboration of rules and requirements to which individual organizations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy..." (p.149). Tolbert (1985) further described an institutional environment as "the understanding and expectations of appropriate organizational form and behavior that are shared by members of society" (p.1). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) stated that institutional environments are comprised of "organizational fields."

Organizational Fields

An organizational field contains "organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar products or services" (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, p.148). Through the organizational field, stakeholders can

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[5] The process in this case is defined as the structure, policies, funding, and procedures of APSOs that are associated with the financial support that APSOs receive from the ASRPWF.

influence the organization's operations and programs. A stakeholder has a vested interest within an organization or organizations. Within the context of this research, a primary stakeholder is the ASRPWF; the performance of and decisions made by management for the APSOs are of interest to the ASRPWF because of the financial support the ASRPWF provides.

Monetary and Non-Monetary Support

Burritt and Welch (1997) explained that a stakeholder can provide two forms of support: monetary and non-monetary. Both types of support deal with the exchange of resources; however, monetary support involves the exchange of money, whereas non-monetary support is an exchange of other goods or services in support of the organizations. For this thesis research, I have focused on the stakeholder relationship between the APSOs and the ASRPWF, which can be described as the ASRPWF providing both monetary and non-monetary support to the APSOs. The monetary support provided to the APSOs comes from the revenue generated by the public's use of gaming and lotteries, while the non-monetary support comes from the ASRPWF services that are provided to the APSOs (i.e. conferences).

Legitimacy

Legitimacy is a concept that Suchman (1995) defined as "a generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed systems of norms, values, beliefs and definitions" (p.574). Furthermore, legitimacy is "an anchor point of a vastly expanded theoretical apparatus

addressing the normative and cognitive forces that constrain, construct, and empower organizational actors" (Suchman, 1995, p.571). Legitimacy can be a source of material resources, legal standing, and cultural status for organizations (Leiter, 2005). The concept of legitimacy is commonly used within the context of institutional theory, and will be discussed further below.

The Definition of Institutional Theory

Institutional theory has been used to explain how an institutional environment can have an impact on the operations, structure, and programs of an organization (DiMaggio, 1983; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Garrett, 2004; Kikulis, 2000; Oliver, 1991; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 1987; Scott, 2001; Zucker, 1987). Institutional theorists DiMaggio and Powell (1983) suggested that the impact this environment has on the operations, structure, and programs of an organization is influenced by institutional mechanisms, which results in similarities among organizations operating within the same organizational field. This was a primary focus for a paper by DiMaggio and Powell (1983), and provides the theoretical foundation for this thesis research.

Three Institutional Mechanisms

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) identified three institutional mechanisms, which are coercive, mimetic and normative mechanisms. For the purpose of this research, coercive mechanisms will be referred to as coercive pressures, because the coercive mechanisms that are present within the APSOs organizational field are present in the form of pressures, which is explained in more detail in chapter five of this thesis.

The institutional mechanisms can occur because of financial, social, political, or economic pressures that exist within an organization's environment. DiMaggio (1983) explained that these mechanisms create "the tendency for organizations to take on the formal and substantive attributes of organizations with which they interact and upon which they depend"(p.159). In other words, because of these mechanisms, organizations adopt similar organizational features, which contribute to organizations becoming more homogeneous within their organizational field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). The three institutional mechanisms are described below.

Coercive Pressure

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) described coercive pressure as the "formal and informal pressures placed on organizations that are dependent upon other organizations or societies in the environment in which the organization functions" (p.150). Furthermore, DiMaggio (1983) explained that coercive pressures are present when a powerful organizations force less powerful ones to comply with their requests.

Some factors that can be attributed to coercive pressures include government mandates, ethical considerations, cultural expectations, dependency on financial resources and tax law requirements. These characteristics can be applied directly or indirectly (DiMaggio, 1983), but are felt by organizations to be a "forceful tactic, persuasion or an invitation to join" (Bowerman, 2002, p.48). The difference between the direct and indirect characteristics is that, directly, a stakeholder will set parameters (i.e. policies or procedures) that need to be met in order to receive support (i.e. the APSOs and the monetary support received from the ASRPWF). Conversely, indirect characteristics

are a means of communication where a representative of an organization communicates with the stakeholder for the purpose of keeping the communication lines open between the two parties (DiMaggio, 1983). DiMaggio (1983) indicated that centralized resources within a field increase the potential for coercive pressures to exist, while Papadimitriou (1998) stated that, because nonprofit organizations are dependent upon stakeholders for resources, they are "obligated or choose to conform to institutional pressures because of their dominant rationality to mobilize resources" (p.169).

As noted above, a fundamental characteristic of coercive pressure in nonprofit organizations is the organizations dependency upon resources to sustain financial stability within an institutional environment (Powell & DiMaggio, 1991). Nonprofit organizations are often dependent upon government support, which suggests these organizations operate within a politically controlled environment (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). A politically controlled environment enables the government to influence the operations and programs of nonprofit organizations (DiMaggio, 1983).

DiMaggio (1983) suggested that in a politically controlled environment, coercive pressures are applied to nonprofit organizations in the form of mandatory compliance to the requests outlined by the government. According to DiMaggio and Powell (1983), forceful tactics are an indication that coercive pressures exist within the nonprofit organization's environment, which suggests this type of pressure impacts the operations, structure, and programs of organizations operating within the same organizational field.

Mimetic Mechanism

Mimetic mechanisms occur when an organization voluntarily copies the actions, structure, and decisions of similar organizations as a means of gaining legitimacy (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; DiMaggio, 1983). The impact of this mechanism on an organizational field is that each organization develops similar structures, operations, and programs. For example, in a hypothetical situation, Hockey Alberta develops a program to help eliminate sexual assault perpetrated by coaches. This program is viewed by the ASRPWF Board and the SRB sport consultants as an excellent program. By having the SRB perceive this program as excellent, the program is legitimized, which increases the possibility that other APSOs will adopt a similar program to gain the same type of recognition. This scenario suggests that organizations are copying other organizations' operations and programs as a means of gaining legitimacy. Legitimacy can increase the amount of resource support for organizations (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), and is especially important for nonprofit organizations.

Furthermore, the presence of mimetic mechanisms can stem from a lack of clarity within nonprofit organizations (Leiter, 2005). For instance, uncertainty can stem from ambiguous long and short-term organizational goals. Leiter (2005) maintained that uncertainty within an organization produces a strong tendency to copy the operations, structure, and programs used by successful organizations in the same organizational field. The end result is that similar operational, structural and program features exist among organizations thus resulting in a homogenous population of organizations within an organizational field.

Normative Mechanism

The use and meaning of the word normative varies within different research context; the term is often associated with the norms, beliefs and values of an organization (Greening & Gray, 1994; Suchman, 1995; Mezias & Scarselletta, 1994). However, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) explained that normative mechanisms are "related to the development of new rules and is linked to the concept of professionalization and professional networks" (p.152). Normative mechanisms can affect an organization's structure, operations, and programs through employees' past experiences with other organizations or specific training acquired from a learning institution (i.e. university or college).

Professional experiences can be transferred from one organization to another through an individual's experiences in other organizations. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) described professional experiences as "the growth and elaboration of professional networks that span organizations and which new models diffuse rapidly" (p.152), which indicates professional experiences from one organization can be carried over to other organizations through the employment opportunities. These experiences can originate in other organizational fields, other organizations, volunteer work, and from auditing an organization or working on the board of directors of a corporation.

For example, when a manager of an amateur sport organization accepts a job offer with another amateur sport organization, the knowledge and experiences gained by working at the previous organization, can influence the manager's decisions with the new amateur sport organization. Thus, the professional experiences of individuals within organizations have similar practices diffused among organizations within the same

environment and the organizational field can then be described having homogenous operational characteristics (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Organizations tend to hire or recruit individuals that have been professionally trained, which can be described as a normative mechanism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Leiter, 2005; Powell & DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 2001). Furthermore, DiMaggio and Powell (1983) defined professional training as the "resting of formal education and of legitimization in a cognitive base produced by a university specialist" (p.152). This aspect of professional training suggests that normative mechanisms are a result of organizations employing individuals with higher educational backgrounds (i.e. university or college). The premise behind professional training is that individuals with higher levels of education and training will have the background to make sound decisions. Professional training for organizations can include topics such as: management, marketing, accounting, and economics. By hiring individuals with professional training, organizations within an organizational field will likely have similar decision-making patterns, which results in a population of organizations with similar organizational features such as marketing strategies, policies, procedures, and/or strategic goals.

Organization' s Responses to Institutional Mechanisms

Oliver (1991) created a typology consisting of different types of organizational responses to the presence of institutional mechanisms: 1) acquiesce; 2) compromise; 3) avoid; 4) defy; and 5) manipulate. The first type of response by an organization is acquiescence, in which the organization does not protest to the institutional requirements and accepts the institutional mechanisms as norms (Oliver, 1991). Acquiescence can

initiate three possible tactics: 1) habit; 2) imitate; and 3) compliance by an organization. These tactics are suggested to influence the actions and decisions of the management of an organization as it relates to their operations and programs. In addition, Oliver (1991) indicated that acquiescence processes or practices are important to organizations, because they "enhance legitimacy and social support" (p.153). Organizations consciously and strategically choose to comply with institutional norms for the purpose of gaining needed resources for the organization (Oliver, 1991).

Compromise is a response given by an organization encountering differing institutional expectations by various stakeholders. The organization then attempts to balance, pacify, or bargain with the stakeholder, in order to meet their expectations. The third typology is avoidance. Oliver (1991) explained that avoidance is non-conformity by organizations through concealing, buffering, or escaping the institutional requirements. Similarly, defiance is an active resistance by an organization by dismissing, challenging, and/or attacking the institutional requirements. The final typology is manipulation, which Oliver (1991) defined as the "purposeful and opportunistic attempt to co-opt, influence or control" (p.157) institutional mechanisms. Oliver's (1991) typology will be discussed with the context of this research in chapter five of this thesis.

Institutional Theory and Nonprofit Organizations

Previous research on nonprofit sport and leisure organizations (i.e. Garrett, 2004; Kikulis, 2000; Leiter, 2005) has employed institutional theory to describe the pressures that exist within this type of organizational field. Slack and Hinings (1994) conducted a study on the NSOs and found the presence of institutional isomorphic mechanisms (i.e.

coercive, mimetic, and normative) within their organizational field. The similarities that exist between an APSO and an NSO can be identified in the organization's structure, operations, programs, and the funding that each organization receives from the two levels of government (Federal and Provincial). The relevance of this literature to this study is the use of institutional theory to identify the presence of the three institutional mechanisms within a similar sporting environment, which indicates that institutional theory is an appropriate theory to be used to examine APSOs.

The sport delivery system in the United Kingdom is similar to Alberta's sport system. Both systems are funded to some degree by gaming revenues and both countries sport organizations are expected to conform to the funding agency's (i.e. Sport England) expectations and policies. A study by Garrett (2004) applied institutional theory to four different volunteer sport clubs (VSC) in England, to illustrate the reactions to institutional mechanisms. Garrett (2004) explained the reaction of the VSCs by using Oliver's (1991) seminal piece of literature on the responses by organizations to the presence of institutional mechanisms within an organizational field. The volunteer sport clubs used in the case study by Garrett (2004) contained similarities to APSOs, as both types of organizations: 1) receive gaming revenues; 2) are volunteer based organizations; and 3) have to meet criteria and reporting requirements to receive funding. Garrett (2004) found specific cases where not every VSC complies with policies set out by Sport England. The VSC's that did not adopt these policies was perceived by Garrett (2005) to be problematic. The solution that was discussed was that the government agency funding VSCs should focus their attention on normative mechanisms and use coercion as a tactic to reinforce the adoption of the government funding agency's policies.

Leiter (2005) conducted a quantitative study that used institutional theory to describe change that occurs within Australia's nonprofit employment organizations. This particular study is important to this thesis because Leiter's (2005) research identified factors thought to induce the three types of institutional mechanisms: government motivations; subordination to the government; funding; supplier or client concentration; union power; goal ambiguity; change; sharing features between organizations; a decline in performance; auditing features; and academic experiences. These factors are discussed further in the Methodology/Methods chapter of this thesis.

Summary

Institutional theory was used as the theoretical framework for this thesis research. Institutional theorists have identified three institutional mechanisms: coercive pressures, mimetic mechanism, and normative mechanisms (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Oliver (1991) maintains that these institutional mechanisms result in different responses by organizations: acquiescence; compromise; avoidance; defiance; and manipulation.

This research has focused on the regulatory environment that is attributed to the funding relationship between the APSOs and the ASPRWF. Through this type of environment, institutional mechanisms are created and impact the operations and programs of APSOs. The next chapter explains the methods used to acquire data for the research, which is based on these theoretical concepts that I have established in this chapter.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY/METHOD

Qualitative research methods have been used to examine organizational change in sport and nonprofit organizations (Kikulis, 2000; O'Brien & Slack, 2004; Papadimitriou, 1998; Silk & Amis, 2000; Silk, Slack, & Amis, 2000). For the purpose of this research, I used qualitative research methods; more specifically, I have taken an interpretative approach to analyzing the data. Creswell (2003) described this approach as being preformed by individuals who "seek understanding of the world in which they live and work" (p.8). As Smith, Evans, and Westerbeek (2005) explained "an interpretative approach seeks to explain the behaviors of people in terms of the meaning it holds for them" (p.100) and is used to understand the environment being studied through the subjective meanings constructed by the researcher (Creswell, 2003). It is through these meanings that categories and themes develop, which is based on the participant's views and opinions being studied (Creswell, 2003). In the context of this research, the participant's views and opinions were sought in the hope that new themes would emerge to help myself better understand how the existence of institutional mechanisms impacts the operations and programs of an Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations (APSO). While other methods of research can be used to identify and understand the institutional mechanisms that are present, qualitative research methods, such as interviews, can draw on an interviewee's first-hand experiences and knowledge of a specific organizational field. It is for this reason that qualitative research methods where used for this thesis research.

Research Design

Face-to-face interviews were selected to be the primary method for collecting data. Managers, board members, a former employee of the APSOs, a manager and a sport consultant with the Sport and Recreation Branch (SRB) were interviewed for this thesis. I began the research by systematically selecting a group of APSOs out of a sample size of 78 organizations funded by the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF). The ASRPWF recognizes 78 APSOs; however, only 77 APSOs receive annual funding through the Associations Development Program Grant (ADPG). Background information (i.e. mission statements, vision statements, and goals of the organization) was obtained from the APSO's selected to participate in this research; the Community Development Ministry; ASPRWF; and SRB websites. Based on the information gathered from the website, specific APSO and SRB managers and members were identified and contacted to participate in the study. Interviews were then conducted, and the data were analyzed and organized into a manageable format.

The reason interviews were selected as the primary method for collecting data as that public documents did not provide an account of the day-to-day operations and programs of the APSOs. However, interviews allowed for APSO management to describe the relationship and their experiences between their organization and the ASRPWF. Furthermore, I ensured anonymity to all interviewees, which meant that interviewees were more likely to be open in regards to discussing their experiences. The specific details of this process are discussed below, starting with the systematic selection of the APSOs.

The Selection Process for APSOs

As mentioned above, organizations were systematically selected from a population of 78 APSOs recognized by the ASRPWF (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-g). A coding mechanism was developed for identifying specific operational typologies for selecting APSOs (see Table 3-1). Three distinct organizational features were used to isolate different APSOs for the interview process and included: the 1) services of APSOs; 2) APSOs association with Sport Canada; and 3) size of each APSO (see Table 3-1). The types of services provided by APSOs included: individual sports; team sports; sports for people with disabilities; multiple sport; and other sport associations. The APSOs association with Sport Canada refers to the National Sport Organization (NSO) that APSOs are affiliated with and whether that NSO receives financial support from Sport Canada, as described further in Table 3-1. The final distinct feature is the size of each APSO, which is based on the number of employees and board members (see Table 3-1).

TABLE 3-1. *Definitions Table for Typologies.*

Characteristics	Description	Codes
The Services of Organizations		
Individual Sports	Individual sports are sports APSOs provide to the communities of Alberta, and which focus on individuals competing at events for the purpose of themselves as well as the organizations they represent.	IS
Team Sports	Team sports are sports APSOs provide to the communities of Alberta, and which focus on groups of two or more individuals that compete against other groups of individuals in competitions.	TS
Sports for Individuals with Disabilities	Sports in which the individual or team participants have a physical or mental disability, but compete in sport competitions.	DS
Multiple Sport Organizations	Organizations that accommodate, organize, and provide multiple sports and provide sport services to the communities of Alberta.	MS
Other Sport Organizations	Sport Organizations that offer unique programs that are associated with sport, but which do not specify a specific sport, they are more programs based (i.e. medical sports clinics).	OS
Association with Sport Canada		
Not Recognized by Sport Canada Sports	Sports where individual or teams are not linked to a National Sport Federation recognized by Sport Canada. These types of sports are often seen as competitive recreational sports or just recreational sports.	NSC
Recognized Sport Canada Sports	Sports where the individuals or teams are linked to a National Sports Federation that is recognized by Sport Canada.	SC
Size of Organizations		
Large Organizations	The number that constitutes a large organization is 15 or more paid employees and volunteer board members who are involved with that organization.	L

Small Organizations	The number that constitutes small organizations is 14 or fewer board members and paid employees that are involved with that organization.	S

I assigned a letter code to each characteristic in Table 3-1, using one or two letters to represent each section. The letters identified as "Codes" in Table 3-1 are combined to identify the operational characteristics (i.e. IS L NSC) of APSOs. The example used – IS L NSC – means that the APSO members participate in an independent based sport, the APSO is considered to be a large organization with more than 15 paid employees, and board members and the NSO that the APSO is affiliated with does not receive Sport Canada funding.

Table 3-2 uses the combination of letter codes to identify the APSOs chosen for this study (see Table 3-2). The codes are found in the column labeled Categories. Each APSO that was selected falls into at least one of the categories. For anonymity purposes, a corresponding number and the term Organization identify the APSOs (i.e. Organization 1).[6] Each interviewee was also provided with the label of P and a number (i.e. P1) for anonymity purposes.[7] It is important to note that Organization 15 had two participants; and as a result Organization 15 appears twice with P15 and P16 within Table 3-2 (this is further discussed below).

[6] Identified in column 2 of Table 3-2 as Organization reference.
[7] Identified in column 3 of Table 3-2 as Interviewee reference.

TABLE 3-2. *APSO's Typologies.*

Categories	Organization Reference	Interviewee Reference	Number of Organizations per Category
IS L NSC	Organization 1	P1	2
IS S NSC	Organization 2	P2	6
IS L SC	Organization 3	P3	12
IS S SC	Organization 4	P4	25
TS L NSC*	Organization 1*	P1*	2
TS S NSC	Organization 5	P5	4
TS L SC	Organization 6	P6	12
TS L SC	Organization 7	P7	12
TS S SC	Organization 8	P8	12
TS S SC	Organization 9	P9	12
MS L NSC	Unable to Contact	Unable to Contact	2
MS S NSC	Organization 10	P10	2
MS L SC	Organization 11	P11	1
MS S SC	N/A	N/A	
DS L NSC	N/A	N/A	
DS S NSC	Organization 12	P12	5
DS L SC	Organization 13	P13	1
DS S SC*	Organization 12*	P12*	2
OS L NSC	Organization 14	P14	1
OS S NSC	Organization 15	P15	2
OS S NSC	Organization 15	P16	2
OS S NSC	Organization 16	P17	2
OS L SC	N/A	N/A	
OS S SC	N/A	N/A	
Sport and Recreation Branch	ASRPWF	SRB Manager	
Sport and Recreation Branch	ASRPWF	SRB Sport Consultant	
*= This symbol means that this organization can be classified into two typologies.			

The last column of Table 3-2, titled Number of Organizations per Category indicates the number of organizations that out of the 78 APSOs recognized by the ASRPWF correspond with the category. A number of APSOs were classified into two of the categories, including Organization 1, Organization 12, and Organization 14. The

APSOs originally chosen for categories TS L NSC and DS S SC did not agree to participate in the study. In addition, Organization 1 and Organization 12 were identified in two categories because the sport overseen by Organization 1 could be considered either an individual or a team-based sport. In the case of Organization 12, some of the sports governed by that organization were individually recognized by Sport Canada, whereas some of the other sports are not; it is for this reason that Organization 12 is identified in two different categories (i.e. DS S NSC or DS S SC).

Based on the systematic approach used, an initial sample size of 20 APSOs was identified. Each APSO chosen corresponded with one category from Table 3-2. However, some of the categories did not have a corresponding APSO, which are MS L SC, DS L NSC, OS L SC, and OS S SC. After identifying and eliminating these categories, the projected sample size was 16 APSOs. The inclusion criteria for choosing the APSOs were as follows: initially, organizations were chosen from Edmonton for convenience purposes. If there was multiple organizations were contacted, the first organization to respond was interviewed. The actual sample size was 16 organizations, which meant that all of the categories in Table 3-2 were filled with a corresponding APSO.

During the recruitment process, four APSOs declined participation in this study, and the two organizations identified with category MS L NSC did not respond to email or phone call requests for an interview. In the case of the four APSOs that declined, new APSOs were chosen to fill that category. The two organizations I was unable to contact from category MS L NSC resulted in my choosing another organization from a different category. This means there are two organizations chosen for the same category.

The reason I chose this organization from this category was that I sent out four email requests to organizations from the following categories: IS L SC; IS S SC; TS L SC; and TS S SC all of which have the greatest number of organizations to choose from. The organization that agreed to an interview first was chosen, and that organization falls under the category of TS S SC. In addition, I purposefully selected the one organization that does not receive the Association Development Program Grant (ADPG) from the ASRPWF in order to see if there were similar institutional mechanisms present within this APSO's regulatory environment. By using this systematic approach, I have identified organizational features that allow for APSOs to be separated into different typologies; thus narrowing the selection of APSOs from a population of 78 organizations to a total sample size of 16 APSOs with differing individual organizational features.

Other Sources of Data

As stated in the Research Design subsection, multiple sources of data were used, including information from websites and documents. All 78 APSOs, along with the ASRWPF, have websites that provide information regarding organizational features (i.e. membership rates, contact information, history of the organization, and executive board members) of the organization and which are in the public domain. Some of the information used included the organization's mission statement, vision statement, long-term goals, short-term goals, documents pertaining to finances of the organization, sponsorship information, contact information, history of the organization, and programs. In addition, some of the APSOs and SRB employees provided me with detailed information regarding the history of the organizations, a handbook (discussing the

policies and procedures of Organization 10), policies, program information, and a financial statement regarding the organization. Hard copies of the information from the websites were printed and filed into a binder according to the organization. This process was completed for each organization, including the ASRPWF. The analysis of this information will be further discussed in the data analysis subsection below.

APSO and Sport and Recreation Branch Interviewees

Once the initial data were collected from websites, I conducted face-to-face interviews with individuals employed as full-time (FTE)[8] upper management[9] or executive board members[10] within the APSOs or SRB of the Provincial Government. The APSO interviewees were selected from 16 organizations as identified in the preceding section. Each interview participant had substantial knowledge regarding the operations, structure, and programs within their respective organization, and it was for this reason that these interviewees were selected. The employees with the highest managerial status within the organization were chosen first; however, in four cases, individuals indicated they had not been employed with the organization long enough, and directed me to an individual substantially more knowledge about the organization and who was better suited to answer the interview questions.

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[8] A full time employee was considered to be one who works between 36 and 40 hours per week year round.
[9] Upper management constitutes individuals employed within an organization who have the authority to direct employees of lesser status, make significant decisions that impact the organization, have a direct knowledge of all of the operations and programs, and is a liaison between the board and the organization (Pride et al., 1999). An example of upper management is an executive director.
[10] Executive board member is commonly a volunteer position, who makes final decisions on policies, procedures, operations, structural, and/or programs pertaining to the organization (Pride et al., 1999). An example of an executive board member could be considered to be a president of an APSO.

Interviews were conducted based on the availability of the APSOs and SRB interviewees. This meant interviews were scheduled at the APSOs and SRB interviewees' earliest convenience and were not conducted in a specific order. During the data collection process, one financial officer, two executive board members, one former executive director, and 13 executive directors from 16 different organizations were interviewed.

In one case, a further interview with a second employee was required due to the first interviewee's lack of knowledge regarding the funding process. The second interviewee provided information regarding the ASRPWF funding that the first interviewee could attest to. In another case, an APSO interviewee could not continue with the interview because of a lack of knowledge and inability to answer questions pertaining to ASRPWF funding. The interviewee then provided me with a contact name of an individual who had been with the organization for a number of years, and who might have more knowledge regarding the ASRPWF funding received by their organization. However, after contacting this individual, the potential interviewee indicated to me that there was insufficient knowledge regarding to annual funding received by the organization. At this point, I made the decision to choose a new organization to interview under the code TS S SC.

In March of 2006, I conducted interviews with two employees of the SRB; a manager and a sport consultant. Both interviewees have the authority to make decisions on policy issues, and monitor the operations of APSOs, and both understand the funding that APSOs receive and the overall relationship between the ASRPWF and the APSOs.

The SRB interviewees are identified throughout this thesis as SRB manager and SRB sport consultant for anonymity purposes.

Interview Questions for the APSOs and the ASRPWF

The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions, which allowed for focused, two-way, conversational communication between participants and the interviewer (Shank, 2002). Open-ended questions allow for in-depth answers in which themes emerge and the experiences and opinions of the interviewees are expressed. All interview questions asked of the APSO and SRB interviewees were developed in conjunction with previous a study conducted by Leiter (2005), and with the literature about institutional theory.

The interviewees were asked between 30 and 40 questions. The questions were divided into five main sections: personal, general, human resources, ASRPWF funding relationship, and accountability (see Appendix C). The personal section asked the interviewees to describe how they became involved with the organizations, their previous employment, and their education backgrounds. Whereas the general section asked about information pertaining to the APSO's operations, programs, national sport bodies, interaction with other organizations (i.e. mimetic mechanisms), and goals. The human resource section (i.e. normative mechanism) addressed areas about employment experiences, academic background, consulting/auditing, and practices that occur within the APSO. The ASRPWF's funding relationship with the APSOs was the foundation for questions pertaining to coercive pressures. This section examined the ASRPWF's influence, the impact of gaming revenues, communication, and policies that impact the operations, structure, and programs of APSOs. Accountability questions pertained to the

APSO's employees and members' opinions regarding the reporting process conducted by the SRB employees.

The SRB employees were asked between 25 and 35 questions, which were related to the individual's role within the organization, the monitoring tactics of the ASRPWF regarding operations and programs, communication, the structure of funding received by the APSOs, and the operations and programs offered by the ASRPWF (see Appendix D). These questions differed from the questions asked of the APSOs interviewees; the SRB are government employees who administer the annual funding to the APSOs and result are in control of the funding, which is different from the APSOs who receive the funding. Thus, the SRB management has a different perspective and the questions asked of the APSO interviewees would have not been appropriate. Secondly, the SRB questions were developed to complement the questions asked of the APSO interviewees. The reason for using complementary questions was to use the responses by the SRB employees to verify the responses of the APSOs. Questions were asked in the following areas: general information about the participants, history of the ASRPWF, policy requirements for the Associations Development Program Grant (ADPG), reporting measures taken by the SRB employees, communication between the APSOs and the sport consultants, and the accountability process implemented by the SRB.

Interview Process

The interviews began in December of 2005 and lasted until April of 2006. Interviews lasted between fifteen minutes and one and a half hours with the average interview length being forty to forty-five minutes. The reason for the time variation was

due to the fact that some interviewees had other job priorities, others meetings to attend, and obligations that needed to be attended to. The result of the length of each interview was a determinant for the amount of detail that was provided for each question by the interviewees. Some interviewees provided examples to questions that were asked, while others just provided one-word responses. As a result, the amount of information provided by the interviewees played a significant role in the length of the interview. A second set of interviews were not considered due to saturation in the types of responses from the APSO interviewees; thus, there was no need to continue on with further interviews.

The location of the interviews was left to the discretion of the interviewees. Most of the interviews were conducted at each interviewee's respective office (see Table 3-3). Two interviews were performed at a nearby coffee shop (P6 and P17). Another interview was conducted at the office of a former executive director of one of the APSOs (P11). P11 had worked for Organization 11 for eight years and had recently changed jobs; thus, P11 was used to represent Organization 11 because of the number of years this interviewee was employed with Organization 11. Most APSOs and SRB offices are located in Edmonton, which meant the majority of interviews were conducted in the Edmonton area, with one interview having taken place in Calgary, and two interviews having been conducted via telephone (see Table 3-3).

TABLE 3-3. *APSO Participants Positions and Location Interviewed.*

Participant	Position in the Organization	Location of Interview
P1	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P2	Executive Director	Office location outside of the Percy Page Centre
P3	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P4	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P5	President	Office location outside of the Percy Page Centre
P6	Financial Officer	Coffee Shop
P7	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P8	Executive Director	Office location outside of the Percy Page Centre
P9	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P10	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P11	Former Executive Director	Office location outside of the Percy Page Centre
P12	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P13	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P14	Former Marketing Coordinator/Executive Board Member	Phone
P15	Executive Board Member	Office location outside of the Percy Page Centre
P16	Executive Director	Percy Page Centre
P17	Executive Director	Coffee Shop
ASRPWF	SRB Sport Consultant	Phone
ASRRPWF	SRB Manager	905 Standard Life Centre

Data Analysis

With the permission of the interviewee, I recorded each interview and transcribed it verbatim. I used Miles and Huberman's (1994) instrument known as a matrix to organize the transcribed data and the data collected from documents and websites. A matrix is defined as "the crossing of two or more main dimensions or variables to see how they interact" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p.239). The matrices in this study were developed based on the three institutional mechanisms and the factors were considered to

induce these mechanisms (see Table 3-4). Each matrix contained quotes and information (i.e. mission statements, vision statements, and the goals of the organization) that corresponded with each factor as it pertains to each of the three institutional mechanisms. Examples of these matrices can be found in Appendix E, F, and G of this thesis. By taking these three sources of data and inputting them into a matrix, I was able to compare, contrast, and verify the data as it relates to each of the three institutional mechanisms.

TABLE 3-4. *Inducers of the Three Mechanisms of Isomorphism (Leiter, 2005).*

Mimetic Mechanism	Coercive Pressure	Normative Mechanism
Goal Ambiguity (GA) Change that Occurs (C) Sharing Features between Organizations (SF) Decline in Performance (D)	Government Motivations (GM) Subordinate to the Government (SG) Funding (F) Supplier or Client Concentration (SC)	Auditing Features (AF) Academic Experiences (AE)

Initially, factors or themes identified in Table 3-4 were used as starting points for coding and organizing the data collected. The definition of these factors can be found in Appendix H. Once the coding process was complete, the data were then re-organized into one document per theme. For example, MS Word document 1 would have a theme of government motivations. All of the data – quotes statements and information from documents and websites (i.e. mission statements, vision statements, goals, and policies) – were re-typed and grouped with the corresponding organization from which this data originated.

Throughout the coding process and the organizing of the data, a number of new themes or factors emerged. These factors were determined by the frequency in which a theme was referred to during the data collection process. Some of the factors include the influence of NSOs on APSOs, accountability, geographic location, and criteria and reporting requirements. For this thesis, I have chosen to focus on the following factors: criteria and reporting requirements and geographic location of APSOs. The reason for choosing these factors was two-fold: first, these factors dealt directly with the funding relationship between the APSOs and the ASRPWF. Second, these factors can be linked with the annual funding that APSOs receive from the ASRPWF. In addition, the Brown

Bag lunch seminar was identified as a potential factor and is also discussed in the chapters five and six.

During the data collection process, the Brown Bag lunch seminar was only referred to by one APSO interviewee (P6); however, the SRB manager referred to the seminar a number of times, which lead to the attendance of the initial Brown Bag lunch seminar by myself. At the initial Brown Bag lunch seminar, most of the discussion focused on the funding that APSOs receive; for this reason, I determined this seminar could potentially have a significant impact on the APSO's operations and programs. As well, the premise behind the Brown Bag lunch seminar fit with institutional theory (this is explained further in the discussion chapter). Based on these two reasons that have included Brown Bag lunch seminars as a factor to be discussed in this thesis.

Validity of the Proposed Research

The validity of a research study refers to the authentication of truth regarding the research that has been conducted (Shank, 2002). By attempting to increase the validity of the study the researcher ensures that the data being collected verifies and authenticates participant responses. In the context of this research, two types of validity are critical: 1) construct validity; and 2) external validity (Cresswell, 2003).

Trochim (2001) described construct validity as the ability of the researcher to operationalize theories, ideas, and definitions through the constructs of the research. Multiple sources of data can be used to verify the responses of participants, and a direct link can be established between the institutional mechanisms and the gathered data; this link increases the validity of this research. Construct validity was achieved by having

three sources of data, which is described as triangulation. The first source of data came from the interviews conducted with the APSOs and SRB employees. The responses from the SRB employees were compared to responses of the APSO employees and executive board members to ensure continuity in the responses. The second source of data came from website analysis, and the third source came from documents provided by APSOs and the ASRPWF. This data was compared and contrasted to verify the responses of the APSO and the SRB employees.

External validity is the ability of the researcher to (analytically) generalize the findings from the research to a specific setting such as persons, places, or time (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The sampling technique in this research uses a systematic approach for the selection of APSOs by combining different characteristics of APSOs. These characteristics encompass all types of APSOs (i.e. team or individual sports, size, and competitive nature of the APSO) are recognized by the Provincial Government and provide the researcher with the ability to generalize the findings to institutional theory.

Ethics Statement

Ethics was important when gathering, analyzing, and presenting the information collected in this research. Interviewees received an information letter and consent form prior to the interviews. The information letter outlined the purpose of the research and was completed by the interviewees to ensure they understood the study. This study had minimal risk involved; one of the primary risks associated with this study was the problem of ensuring anonymity and confidentiality for the participants. To make certain that anonymity and confidentiality were provided the names of the participants and

organizations were not identified. I described earlier in this section that pseudonyms were used in place of the interviewees' and organizations' names. Furthermore, Dr. Daniel Mason (supervisor) and I were the only two individuals with access to the transcribed interviews; this was indicated on the consent form.

In addition, the two transcribed interviews conducted with the SRB employees were sent back to the interviewees for verification of their responses. This was at the request of the participants; they wanted to ensure their responses would be accurately reflected within the context of the study. As well, those same transcripts were sent via email to the SRB general manager for approval for use within the context of this study. These were all done at the request of the participants. The thesis research was submitted to the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation Research Ethics Review Board (FPER REB) and approved. Based on this approval by the FPER REB, I was able begin the data collection process. The results of that process are discussed below.

CHAPTER 4

FACTORS THAT EMERGED FROM THE DATA

The data analysis revealed two factors that had an impact on the operations, structure, and program decisions faced by Alberta Provincial Sport Organizations (APSOs): 1) the criteria and reporting requirements imposed by the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF) and 2) the geographic location of each APSO office. An additional factor, the "Brown Bag" lunch seminar program recently organized by the Sport and Recreation Branch (SRB) management was recognized to have a potential impact on the organizations operations, structures, and program decisions. During the time of data collection, only one initial Brown Bag lunch seminar had been hosted by SRB management. Since the initial Brown Bag lunch seminar, a number of seminars have been hosted by the SRB management. A list of those seminars and topics discussed can be found in Appendix I.

Each factor is discussed in detail below, along with the influence these factors have on APSOs. A number of quotes are used within this section. The quotes originate from three types of interviewees used for this study: APSO interviewees, and a SRB manager, and a SRB sport consultant. Each interviewee's position within their respective organization has been described in the Government Funding Structure for Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations section in Appendix B.

Sport consultants are SRB employees are responsible for a portfolio that includes servicing APSOs (see Appendix B). The service provided by the SRB is in the form of grant and ASRPWF information, review of the reports supplied by the APSOs, suggestions to improve the APSOs' operations and programs, and solutions to problems

that APSOs are encountering. As highlighted in the Methods chapter, the manager interviewed from the SRB will be acknowledged as SRB manager and the sport consultant will be identified as SRB sport consultant. As well, the APSO interviewees are identified by P and a number (as explained in chapter three), as well as by their position within their organizations, the organization they are employed with, and the date of the interview. It is also important to note that, while there were between 30 and 40 questions asked of the APSOs and 25 to 35 questions asked of the SRB interviewees, not all data obtained from the interviews will be presented below; only the information relevant to the theoretical framework will be discussed.

The initial focus of this research was on the impact of gaming revenues on APSOs. However, during the data collection process, 11 APSO interviewees indicated they had limited knowledge regarding the source of funding from the ASRPWF. For example: P1 stated, "I actually don't know where the funding comes from. I know it comes from the Foundation – perhaps sport and services. I don't even know. I know they give us money, and I know we have to account for it, and that is pretty much all that I know about it" (executive director of Organization 1, personal communication, February 23, 2006). As a result, gaming and gaming revenues do not explicitly appear in the transcribed interviews and results that follow.

Criteria and Reporting Requirements

APSOs must comply with the criteria requirements of the ASRPWF in order to receive annual grant funding from the Association's Development Program Grant (ADPG). The purpose of the ADPG is to provide a "basic directive towards athlete

development, leadership development, volunteer development, and coaching development and operations" (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006).

There are 12 numbered eligibility criteria requirements associated with the ADPG, which is the only type of annual funding support the APSOs receive from the government of Alberta. These criteria focus on areas such as athletic membership, the reporting process, finances, legal status, and the structural characteristics of the APSOs. The intent of the criteria is to create a minimum standard that APSOs must comply with in order to receive annual funding.

For example, criteria number four requires that the association (i.e. APSO) "must have a minimum of 500 members or 5 member clubs with a total membership of 500 members" (Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation, 2003). Criteria seven and eight outline the mandatory reporting requirements used by the ASRPWF to ensure that the criteria requirements are met by the APSOs (SRB sport consultant, personal communication, March 6, 2006). Criteria seven and eight also state that the APSOs must provide substantive documentation including a business plan, post program analysis, ASRPWF application form, provincial sport association questionnaire, and audited financials.

Furthermore, what is not outlined in the reporting requirements, but is implied to the APSOs upon their submission of the documentation to the sport consultants, are criteria that specify the proper layout and formatting of business plans and post program analysis. For example, interviewee P4 outlines what is expected of her organization in terms of audited financials below:

When we do our yearly review, we provide them with a copy of our audited

> financials and they have to be broken down in such a way that they show each contribution from the Foundation (ASRPWF) is a line item. So, our annual grant is one line and then gaming revenue would be another line, donation funding would be another line. (executive director of Organization 4, personal communication, December 9, 2005)

Documentation is provided to the sport consultants who then review the information and later meet with the management (i.e. executive director, or the president) of the APSO to discuss any questions or concerns arising from the information collected. In some cases, recommendations and suggestions are made to improve the operations and programs of the APSOs; however the purpose of the reporting process is to ensure the 12 minimum criteria are met and that annual funding is being appropriately used (SRB sport consultant, personal communication, March 6, 2006).

For 77 APSOs, there is no other choice but to comply with these requirements, or the SRB sport consultants have the right to decrease or revoke the annual funding an APSO receives from the ASRPWF (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006). For example, criteria six indicated the "Foundation (ASRPWF) assistance shall not exceed 50% of the Association's (APSOs) overall operating budget (total operating expenses) with the intent of the association moving toward self-sufficiency" (Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation, 2003). The purpose of criteria six is to ensure the ASRPWF is not the sole provider of funding to the APSOs, and that APSOs find other sources of revenue such as corporate sponsorship, donations, telemarketing, or membership fees generated by the APSOs (SRB sport consultant, personal communication, March 6, 2006). The SRB manager described how and when APSOs'

funding would be reduced: "We will reduce their funding to a point where it is 50%. Say they are scheduled to get $20,000, and they're only spending $18, 000; well we would reduce their funding down to $9,000 because that makes up half of the overall expenditures" (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006). The SRB sport consultant corroborated the statement made by the SRB manager by indicating that funding "has been reduced in the past in a few circumstances to bring their (APSOs) annual funding below 50%. So that is an example of a rule that has been used, a criteria that has been followed" (SRB sport consultant, personal communication, March 6, 2006). The statements made by the SRB manager and SRB sport consultant illustrate how criteria and reporting requirements are used for monitoring purposes to ensure annual funding is being properly used by the APSOs.

Complying with the Criteria and Reporting Requirements

A by-product of criteria and reporting requirements is compliance by the APSOs. For example, in the past, the SRB sport consultant has indicated that Organization 10 needs to be more self-sufficient in terms of having other sources of revenue (i.e. corporate sponsorship) and should not be so dependent on the ASRPWF as the only source of financial support (executive director of Organization 10 [P10], personal communication, February 3, 2006). P10 met this requirement through increasing membership fees and by gathering more sponsors. A key point in this example is the reference made to self-sufficiency, which is identified as ADPG criteria six. P10's reference to meeting criteria six is one example of compliance to the criteria and reporting requirements. The organization's dependency on funding is likely the reason for

compliance. "There are certain things that we have to do in order to get the funding. So, we do those things to keep us in good standing, and then we get the funding because the funding is our lifeblood, as I am sure everyone in this building has said the same thing" (executive director of Organization 9, personal communication, March 8, 2006). This sentiment was echoed by P10 and P11 (executive director of Organization 10, personal communication, February 3, 2006; former executive director of Organization 11, personal communication, January 26, 2006).

Solutions to Uncertainty Associated with Criteria and Reporting Requirements

While compliance is a result of criteria and reporting requirements imposed on the APSOs, so too is the interaction (i.e. contact in the form of direct and indirect communication between APSOs) that occurs between APSOs. In some cases, APSOs are not certain about some aspects of the criteria and reporting requirements and as a result, will interact with other APSOs. This interaction indicates that more information is required to relieve uncertainty with the criteria or reporting requirements, or provide answers to APSOs inquiries as to the nature of the responses by other APSOs that have submitted reports to the SRB.

For example, P4 stated, "Occasionally I will talk to my neighbours[11] on this side or my neighbours on that if a grant application is due, or if I don't know how to fill something in, or if I have questions about how their review went or something like that"

[11] The term "neighbours" is in reference to an organization that has an office physically located beside another organization. The Percy Page Centre is an example of a building that houses 65 provincial sport, recreation, and arts organizations where APSOs' offices are located beside one another. Organization 4 has an office location at the Percy Page Centre.

(executive director of Organization 4, personal communication, December 9, 2005). The quote by P4 suggested some APSOs have a better understanding of the grant application process than others, and that through this interaction there is a transfer of information between P4 and another APSO. After conferring with other APSOs, P4 was able to develop an answer to the original question posed regarding a grant application or how the reporting process went for another APSO. This implies that some of the information transferred between the two organizations could be applied to Organization 4's grant applications. This information could include format, language used in the application procedure, or layout. The content of the information depends solely on the questions posed during this process.

P4 is not the only APSO that takes this approach to solving problems associated with these requirements; P1 (executive director of Organization 1, personal communication, February 23, 2006), P3 (executive director of Organization 3, personal communication, February 9, 2006), P7 (executive director of Organization 7, personal communication, March 14, 2006), P9 (executive director of Organization 9, personal communication, March 8, 2006), P10 (executive director of Organization 10, personal communication, February 3, 2006), P11 (former executive director of Organization 11, personal communication, January 26, 2006), P12 (executive director of Organization 12, personal communication, January 25, 2006), P14 (former marketing coordinator/executive board member of Organization 14, personal communication, March 24, 2006), and P17 (executive director of Organization 16, personal communication, January 26, 2006) also indicated they take a similar approach when encountering uncertainty with criteria or reporting requirements. Having 10 APSOs

indicate they interact with other APSOs to solve problems implies this is a common approach for some APSOs in solving problems regarding criteria and reporting requirements.

In summary, the APSOs are required to adhere to the criteria requirements and complete the reporting process if they wish to receive the ADPG. APSOs that receive the ADPG have little choice but to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements, given that non-compliance would give the sport consultants the right to decrease or remove the annual funding these APSOs receive. Based on the data, the APSOs do, in fact, comply with the mandatory reporting and criteria requirements. In circumstances where APSOs encounter uncertainty with regard to the criteria and reporting requirements, the amount of interaction between organizations is likely to increase, thus suggesting interaction between APSOs can be a means of finding a solution to problems encountered with criteria and reporting requirements.

Geographic Location

There are 65 provincial sport, recreation, and arts organizations that have office space at the Percy Page Centre (PPC) in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (Percy Page Centre, 2006). The offices are physically situated at the PPC on a number of different floors. The offices on each floor are divided by temporary cubical walls, which create a very open environment. The remaining APSOs that do not have an office in the Percy Page Centre are located throughout Alberta in cities including Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, and Medicine Hat. Of the APSOs that were interviewed, three had an office outside of the Percy Page Centre (i.e. Organization 2, 6, and 8), and 13 had offices located within the

Percy Page Centre. From the data collected, the geographic location appears to influence the amount of interaction that takes place between APSOs.

The Interaction Between APSOs is Influenced by Geographic Location

The close proximity of APSO's offices at the PPC appears to encourage interaction between organizations. The nature of this interaction is reflected in this quote by P3:

> That's the beauty of this building, the Percy Page Centre; we have 65 different athletic and recreational organizations that use this as their office. You know, a lot of times we will go over for a cup of coffee or schedule meeting and we'll discuss what all of our problems are. (executive director of Organization 3, personal communication, February 9, 2006)

P3's quote suggests the interaction between organizations involves sharing ideas and information. Through this interaction, organizations that have experienced success in their operations and programs can be used to assist other APSOs in adopting a resolution to their problems. Furthermore, the use of temporary cubical walls to divide the offices of APSOs allows for conversations to be heard by other APSOs within close proximity. For APSOs located at the PPC, the open environment and physical setup of the offices makes it easier for APSOs to witness the actions of other APSOs and interact with other APSOs more frequently. For example, the SRB sport consultant responsible for P1's portfolio suggested that a harassment policy be created for Organization 1. Due to the fact that P1 has an office located in the PPC, it was easy for P1 to approach other APSOs and ask to see copies of their harassment policies:

> I was looking for some information about harassment policies, and I went to a bunch of different organizations just asking them what they had in place – because that was something that we didn't have in place and was a recommendation from the Foundation that we get a good harassment criteria. So, it really helped, and I went through to a couple of organizations… (executive director of Organization 1, personal communication, February 23, 2006)

By interacting with different APSOs, P1 was likely to adopt similar harassment policy elements from other APSOs when P1 was developing Organization 1's harassment policy.

In comparison to P1's example, three APSOs – Organization 2 (executive director of Organization 2, personal communication, February 27, 2006), Organization 6 (financial officer, personal communication, March 7, 2006), and Organization 8 (executive director of Organization 8, personal communication, March 3, 2006) that do not have an office location at the PPC indicated there is limited interaction between themselves and other APSOs. P2 stated, "We don't have a great deal of interaction with the other sport associations… we are really secluded and sheltered as a sport – unfortunately" (executive director of Organization 2, personal communication, February 27, 2006).

In addition, P8 also stated there is a reduced amount of interaction between himself and other APSOs. "I think we stay within ourselves a little bit" (executive director of Organization 8, personal communication, March 3, 2006). I suggest the reason for this reduced amount of interaction is due to the proximity of Organizations 2, 6, and 8

in reference to those APSOs located at the PPC, which implies that Organization 2, 6, and 8 are less likely to witness the operations and programs of other APSOs.

Furthermore, the type of information that can be discussed between organizations can originate from the experiences (i.e. academic or work related) of individuals within an organizational field. The knowledge gained from the experiences of individuals is likely being transferred between APSOs that are in close proximity of one another through interaction. For example, P9 stated:

> I have worked for the organization for 5 years now, but I have worked in the building here with other organizations for an additional 5 years, so 10 years in total I have been in the Percy Page. I have held executive director positions with 5 different provincial groups throughout those 10 years. (executive director of Organization 9, personal communication, March 8, 2006)

By moving from one APSO to another and being located in the PPC the experiences of P9 gained from working within an organizational field is seemingly transferred from one organization to another by being employed with multiple APSOs. It is also likely that being employed at the PPC for 10 years has aided in the development of relationships with other APSO managers located at the PPC, which results in an increased amount of interaction between P9 and other APSO managers. P9 stated, "There is a lot of that goes on in the building here. Yeah, we share knowledge. Somebody has a problem or wants to get advice on something that maybe their not as knowledgeable about or whatever, then we will go to other groups and find out what they are doing" (executive director of Organization 9, personal communication, March 8, 2006). The term "knowledge" that is used by P9 can be interpreted as academic knowledge or knowledge

gained through experience within the given field. In either case, P9 acknowledged that having an office in close proximity to another APSO facilitates the interaction between organizations within that given location.

Based on the data collected, geographic location seemingly influences the amount of interaction that occurs between APSOs. The evidence supports the notion that the close proximity of organizations at the PPC has facilitated the interaction between APSOs, which leads to the sharing of ideas and information when APSOs are encountering problems with the operations and programs of their organization. The close proximity of the APSOs at the PPC also enables APSOs to witness the success of other APSOs and attempt to adopt similar operation and program features. This is in contrast to Organizations 2, 6, and 8, who do not have office space at the Percy Page Centre and who indicated that they did not interact as much with other APSOs in comparison to those APSOs with an office location within the PPC.

Brown Bag Lunch Seminars

SRB employees and the ASRPWF Board implemented the first Brown Bag lunch seminar on March 21, 2006. It is important to note that data collected on the Brown Bag lunch seminar is based on the initial seminar and the SRB manager's anticipated results of future seminars. This seminar is an attempt to provide resources[12] to solve issues encountered by APSOs with their organization. The SRB manager stated:

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[12] The term resource is in reference to the Brown Bag lunch seminars, which provide an opportunity for APSOs to approach other APSOs to find solutions to problems they are encountering.

> We are going to get together as many of the groups that are interested and discuss some issues that they are facing over a series of brown bag lunch seminars. We will either bring somebody in to help them work through the issues or have some sort of presentation by one of the groups that has had success in that area. Again, to facilitate them getting together and talking amongst themselves and getting some resources out that way. If there are resources that are out there that can help a lot of the groups, we'll pass those resources on, whether they are federal or provincial things or other things. (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006)

During the data collection process, I was able to attend the initial meeting. At the initial seminar, 31 organizations were in attendance; 5 of those organizations had offices outside the Percy Page Centre (SRB manager, personal communication, July 10, 2006). The initial seminar was a brainstorming session led by management of the SRB.

The purpose of the initial seminar was to bring the APSOs together and decide on what topics to discuss at future seminars. A number of topics were proposed for future seminar discussions; topics included insurance premiums, the development of strategic plans for APSOs, grant information, or funding strategies. These seminars are expected to be held eight times a year; however, the SRB management will increase the number of seminars as required. All APSOs were invited to attend one of two possible seminar locations: the Percy Page Centre in Edmonton, or an unspecified location in Calgary, Alberta.

Since the initial Brown Bag lunch seminar, there has been four seminars held in Edmonton and three seminars held in Calgary, Alberta, which have included topics on

police records checks, engaging and retaining volunteers, lottery funding programs, insurance and risk management, and good accounting practices. Two potential byproducts are suggested to result from the implementation of the Brown Bag lunch seminars: increased interaction between APSOs and development of solutions to problems faced by APSOs.

The Interaction between APSOs as a Result of Brown Bag Lunch Seminars

As indicated by the SRB Manager, the intention of the Brown Bag lunch seminars is to foster communication and interaction between APSOs and to develop solutions to problems that APSOs are encountering (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006). Prior to the initial Brown Bag lunch seminar, P6 stated: "I would like to see everyone get together and develop relationships so that we can address different areas and even just amongst ourselves set up a best practices book" (financial officer of Organization 6, personal communications, March 7, 2006). P6's comments capture the premise of the seminar as described by the SRB manager, which suggests there is a need for future Brown Bag lunch seminars. By implementing the Brown Bag lunch seminar, the possibility for interaction between APSOs increases. I suggest that, because of this interaction relationships will be developed between APSOs, which will ultimately lead to organizations sharing of information between one another.

The Brown Bag Lunch Seminar as a Resource for APSOs

Organizations that have successfully solved problems related to previously unresolved issues will be requested to make a presentation at future Brown Bag lunch

seminars in order to share their solutions with other APSOs (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006). These solutions can then be considered by APSOs encountering the same or a similar problem, which means there is a greater possibility that the solution contains elements of the organization's presentation. Having organizations present topics for which they have achieved a degree of success will mean APSO managers who are encountering problems will be able to use the presentation as a resource for developing solutions.

At the initial presentation of the Brown Bag lunch seminar, SRB management acknowledged that if there was a topic that could not be addressed by the sport consultants or another organization, the SRB was willing to bring in an outside professional for discussion purposes. For example, professionals would be brought in to discuss options for lowering the areas where APSOs are experiencing high cost in certain areas, such as insurance premiums. "We bring in people that might be able to help them. We give presentations and those types of things that might be able to help them cut costs in certain ones of those areas" (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006). By having a professional make a presentation from an industry related to one of the topics discussed at the beginning of the Brown Bag lunch seminar section, the professional's experiences (i.e. academic training, or work-related experiences) and knowledge can influence APSO management's decisions in cutting costs for their organization. Essentially, APSOs can either take the information from the professional's presentation and apply it to their organization, or the APSOs can choose to ignore it and apply a different solution.

As indicated by the SRB manager, the implementation of the Brown Bag lunch will likely result in an increase in interaction between organizations, and provide a means by which to develop solutions to problems faced by APSOs. Presentations will be made by organizations that have successfully generated a solution for problems they are encountering, which suggests that APSOs encountering similar problems will consider elements of the presentation as potential solutions. Furthermore, management also indicated they would bring in professionals to make presentations to the APSOs. This is an example of individuals who transfer the knowledge gained from their employment experiences or academic training in a field to the APSOs through their presentation. This knowledge could be then reflected in the operations and programs of the APSO.

Summary

In summary, this chapter identified two factors and one potential factor that contributes to the presence of institutional mechanisms within the APSOs' environment. These factors are: 1) the criteria and reporting requirements imposed by the ASRPWF; 2) the geographic location of each APSO's office; and 3) "Brown Bag" lunch seminars organized by the ASRPWF and SRB management, which is the potential factor. Each factor was described individually, along with the influence that these factors have on APSOs. Some of the influences associated with the different factors include compliance, solutions to uncertainty, interaction between APSOs, and solutions to problems that APSOs are facing. These mechanisms, in reference to criteria and reporting requirements, geographic location, and the Brown Bag lunch seminar will be discussed in chapter five of this thesis.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Criteria and reporting requirements and the geographic location of Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations (APSOs) are factors that contribute to the presence of institutional mechanisms (coercive pressures, mimetic, and normative mechanisms) faced by APSOs, and are a result of their reliance on funding from the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF). In addition, the recent developments of the Brown Bag lunch seminar appears to lead to the presence of institutional mechanisms. Each mechanism is discussed individually in this chapter.

To revisit DiMaggio and Powell (1983), coercive pressures are placed on an organization by another organization to force them to conform to and adopt certain goals and expectations. Mimetic mechanisms are present when an organization has ambiguous goals or is dealing with uncertainty. The presence of ambiguous goals or uncertainty results in an organization modeling successfully organizations within their field in an attempt to clarify their goals or relieve the uncertainty. Normative mechanisms are the final type of institutional mechanism, and is the transfer of the knowledge of an individual gained from previous work experiences in a specific organizational field (i.e. amateur sport) or academic training. Ultimately, this knowledge can create change in the operations and programs of the organization. Furthermore, these institutional mechanisms create similarities between organizations operating within the same organizational field in regard to their operations, structure, and programs (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). These

institutional mechanisms (i.e. coercive pressure, mimetic, and normative mechanisms) created by these three factors are discussed below.

Coercive Pressure

DiMaggio and Powell (1983) described coercive pressure as a formal pressure imposed on an organization that is dependent upon another organization for resources; thus, coercive pressure is seemingly present within the APSOs' environment as a result of the criteria and reporting requirements identified in the previous chapter. Coercive pressure stems from APSOs being forced to comply with criteria and reporting requirements if they wish to receive funding from the Associations Development Program Grant (ADPG). Non-compliance may result in a reduction or complete removal of annual funding. The APSOs are dependent upon the ASRPWF funding, and through this dependency, the formal pressures associated with criteria and reporting requirements are imposed. Essentially, criteria and reporting requirements are a type of coercive pressure that induces compliance by APSOs.

The Response of APSOs in Relation to Coercive Pressures

Oliver (1991) explained there were a number of different responses by organizations in regard to the presence of these institutional mechanisms. One of those responses was acquiescence or, more specifically, compliance. Compliance was defined as "conscious obedience to or incorporation of values, norms, or institutional requirements" (Oliver, 1991, p.152). Given the definition by Oliver (1991), provincial amateur sport organizations in Alberta that are annually funded by the ASRPWF comply

with the criteria and reporting requirements implemented by the Sport and Recreation Branch (SRB). An important fact to consider is that APSOs are consciously aware of their response to these requirements. Statements by P9 (executive director of Organization 9, personal communication, March 8, 2006) and P10 (executive director of Organization 10, personal communication, February 3, 2006), as indicated in the previous chapter of the thesis, support the idea that APSOs are aware of their obedience to institutional requirements. Furthermore, Oliver (1991) presented the argument that compliance to coercive pressures is related to a "self serving benefit" (p.153) for an organization. The benefit can come in the form of financial support and is the reason APSOs comply with the criteria and reporting requirements.

The control over annual funding empowers the SRB to dictate and determine whether the minimum criteria and reporting requirements have been met. Based on the funding structure (see Appendix B), the SRB's power originates from the control of funding provided from the Community Development Ministry and the ASRPWF Board. This follows with DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) notion of a politically controlled environment, which can impact the operations and programs of a nonprofit organization.

In the context of this research, the coercive pressure created by the regulatory control over funding suggests that APSOs operate within a politically controlled environment, which results in APSOs' compliance to criteria and reporting requirements and has an impact on the decisions and actions of APSOs management. For example, criteria number four (APSOs must have a minimum of 500 individual members or 5 member clubs totaling 500 members [Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation, 2003]) pressures APSO staff to accommodate at least 500 members. This

could be difficult for some organizations, because of a lack of staff and funding, which can put a financial strain on the APSO. For APSOs that have more staff and a larger operational budget, there is less pressure to meet this requirement, because they are able to accommodate this amount of membership. In either case, compliance is a response to the coercive pressure influenced by a politically controlled environment.

In summary, reporting and criteria requirements are a type of coercive pressure faced by APSOs. A result of these pressures is compliance, which is acknowledged by Oliver (1991) to be tactic of acquiescence. The type of environment that accompanies coercive pressures in the context of this study is a politically controlled environment. This type of environment can dictate and constrain the actions and decisions of the APSOs' management.

Mimetic Mechanisms

Mimetic Mechanisms and Criteria and Reporting Requirements

DiMaggio (1983) stated that, "The more centralized are the resources upon which an organizations in a field depend, the greater the degree of interaction among organizations in that field" (p. 149). The interaction that occurs between APSOs is seemingly a result of the coercive pressures faced by the APSOs to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements set out by the ASRPWF. DiMaggio (1983) suggested that mimetic mechanisms result from conditions of uncertainty. For APSOs, the criteria and reporting requirements are sometimes accompanied by degrees of uncertainty or problems encountered by the APSOs. To relieve the uncertainty or address the problems with regard to these requirements, APSOs interact with other APSOs and ask for

assistance in order to achieve compliance. For example, when P4 encountered problems with grant applications, assistance came from P4's neighbours[13] (executive director of Organization 4, personal communication, December 9, 2005). This type of interaction is described as a mimetic mechanism because the interaction between the two parties has likely lead to the adoption of another APSO's operations or program features, which thus relieves the APSO's uncertainty about the grant application. A similar reaction was found to be the case for 10 out of 16 participants interviewed for this study. It is evident that in order to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements set out by the ASRPWF, APSOs interact with other APSOs to relieve uncertainty; this is much more likely to occur in the case where APSOs have coexisting office locations.

Mimetic Mechanisms and Geographic Location

As noted in the previous chapter, the degree of interaction between APSOs is influenced by the geographic location of the APSOs; organizations are more likely to interact with other APSOs they are close in proximity to. Galaskiewicz and Wasserman (1989) maintained that networks developed through interaction between organizations are critical to creating mimetic mechanisms. The fundamental mimetic mechanism in the context of this research is the Percy Page Centre (PPC), in which the close proximity of APSOs' offices increases the possibility of interaction. By having the APSOs in a central location, like the PPC, APSOs are more likely to emulate another APSO's success and apply a similar approach to situations they face.

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[13] It is important to note that P4 has an office location at the Percy Page Centre; the neighbours they are referring to are other APSOs.

The reason for the interaction can be linked to coercive pressure faced by APSOs to comply with the reporting and criteria requirements and to the convenience of having a group of APSOs within a coexisting location. By having most APSOs in a central location at the PPC, I present the idea that this mimetic mechanism has become a vital resource for APSOs. The interaction that occurs because ASPOs share an office location in the PPC can be a means of relieving uncertainty regarding criteria and reporting requirements; this can also be suggested to occur with the initiation of the Brown Bag lunch seminars.

Mimetic Mechanisms and Brown Bag Lunch Seminars

As explained in chapter four, the premise behind the Brown Bag lunch seminars is to facilitate communication between APSOs, and through the presentations made by successful, APSOs develop solutions to problems that APSOs are facing. It is important to reiterate that the data collected is based on the initial Brown Bag lunch seminar and the SRB manager's perception of the anticipated outcome of future seminars. Based on institutional theorists definition of mimetic mechanisms, the Brown Bag lunch seminar could potentially contribute to the presence of mimetic mechanisms within the APSO's environment. I suggest that increasing the communication between APSOs through this seminar will result in organizations copying other organizations' features as a result of the presentations and the interaction that will occur.

An important aspect to consider regarding the seminar presentations is the presenter. There are going to be two types of presenters that make presentations: APSOs who have achieved success regarding a certain topic and outside professionals who deal

directly with a certain topic. For example, the SRB manager suggested in the presentation at the initial Brown Bag lunch seminar that the topics scheduled for discussion might be presented by those APSOs who have had some success within that area. By having "successful" APSOs make presentations, the pressure to adopt similar operational features as the APSO presenting increases. Because the APSO making the presentation was successful in an area and was recognized by the SRB management to be a legitimate organization to make the presentation, another APSO may adopt those characteristics in the hope of gaining the same success. This scenario would fit with DiMaggio and Powell's (1983) definition of mimetic mechanisms, which occur when an organization adopts a similar operational feature as another organization with the expectation of gaining the same success and legitimacy as the other organization.

Being asked by the SRB management to make a presentation at this seminar suggests that the APSO is perceived as possessing legitimate actions in relation to a certain topic. Given this reason, the likelihood that APSOs in attendance coping or adopting similar actions of the presenting APSO will increase. I suggest that the SRB managers are going to use the implementation of the Brown Bag lunch seminar as a resource for relieving uncertainty in much the same way as having most APSOs in a coexisting location, such as the PPC.

The Response of APSOs in Relation to Mimetic Mechanisms

The response by the APSOs in relation to these mimetic mechanisms is acquiescence or, more specifically, imitation. Oliver (1991) defined imitation as the "mimicking of institutional models" (p.152). Furthermore, Oliver (1991) associated

imitation with mimetic mechanisms. In the context of this research, I have identified two factors in relation to mimetic mechanisms (geographic location and Brown Bag lunch seminars) where imitation has occurred, or should occur, to relieve uncertainty in regards to criteria and reporting requirements. The coercive pressure to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements, in order to continue to receive annual funding is the catalyst for APSOs imitating successful APSOs to relieve uncertainty. Based on institutional theory, a response by the APSOs of imitation can lead to organizations having similar organizational characteristics, which is discussed later on in this chapter.

To summarize, the coercive pressure to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements of the ADPG has lead to interaction between APSOs. This interaction is fostered by all three factors: criteria and reporting requirements, geographic location, and Brown Bag lunch seminars. The close proximity of the APSOs to one another at the PPC increases the interaction between APSOs and can be described as a mimetic mechanism, as defined by DiMaggio (1983), DiMaggio & Powell (1983), and Galaskiewicz & Wasserman (1989). Through this interaction, APSOs are likely to copy or adopt similar organizational features of other APSOs. In addition, the interaction and presentations of APSOs at future Brown Bag lunch seminars will provide an example of a mimetic mechanism.

I have also suggested that geographic location is a resource to APSOs for facilitating interaction and relieving uncertainty. In the same aspect, the Brown Bag lunch seminar can also be perceived as a future resource for acquiring solutions to problems encountered by APSOs. The response to these institutional mechanisms is acquiescence or, more specifically, compliance and imitation. To re-emphasize, geographic location

and the implementation of the Brown Bag lunch are examples of mimetic mechanisms that facilitate the interaction between APSOs, and which stem from coercive pressure to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements of the ASRPWF in order to maintain funding.

Normative Mechanisms

As stated in chapter four, there is a high degree of interaction between APSOs in close proximity to one another, in contrast to the limited interaction demonstrated by APSOs not located at the PPC. Through this interaction, the knowledge gained by APSO managers through their experiences (i.e. previous work or academic experiences) is more likely to be exchanged with APSOs with office locations at the PPC. In the context of this research, this type of interaction is an example of a normative mechanism. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) described normative mechanisms as the transfer of an individual's experiences (i.e. work or academic). As discussed in the example provided in chapter four, P9's (executive director of Organization 9, personal communication, March 8, 2006) experiences and his statement that there is a transfer of knowledge that occurs between APSOs with office locations in the PPC suggests that this contributes to the presence of normative mechanisms. This interaction implies it is more likely that an APSO manager would adopt similar organizational characteristics of a successful manager, with those organizational characteristics based on that manager's experiences. It is for this reason that the APSOs who have an office location at the PPC are more likely to experience the presence of normative mechanisms than APSOs not in the PPC.

The Brown Bag lunch seminar is an example of a potential normative mechanism that can be found within the APSOs' environment. DiMaggio (1983) referred to a professional workshop as an example of a normative mechanism. DiMaggio (1983) identified Arts organizations that are involved with professional workshops and that have management consultants to make presentations to the organizations. Similarly, the SRB management are going to attempt to bring in specialists related to certain topics (i.e. insurance) to make presentations. These presentations may provide a source of information based on the professional's experience working in the field or their academic background. Thus, by gathering this information from the professional's presentation, the likeliness of the APSOs adopting the suggestions increases.

In summary, normative mechanisms are present for those APSOs who have an office location at the PPC. Based on the data collected, there is a significant amount of interaction that occurs between APSOs located at the PPC, which means there is a sharing of information between the managers of those organizations. Furthermore, it is expected that Brown Bag lunch seminars will also be a foreseeable normative mechanism for the future. This is based on the fact that there will be presentations made by professionals to the APSOs, and it is likely that APSOs in attendance of this presentation would likely adopt the suggestions made by the professional.

General Discussion

The premise of this thesis research was to identify the institutional mechanisms (i.e. coercive pressures, mimetic mechanism, and normative mechanism) that impact the operations and programs of APSOs based on the ADPG that the APSOs receive. All

institutional mechanisms were present, and I believe that, through the application of institutional theory to the data, institutional theory is an appropriate theoretical foundation for this thesis research. However, the findings are in contrast to two of the previous studies discussed in the Theoretical Framework chapter and will be discussed further below.

Comparing and Contrasting the findings of Garret (2004) and Leiter (2005)

As noted in the Theoretical Framework chapter, other research has used institutional theory to examine amateur sport organizations and nonprofit organizations. The following section compares and contrasts the results of this thesis research with the studies of Garrett (2004) and Leiter (2005). The study by Garrett (2004) was conducted on the sport delivery system in the United Kingdom (UK); more specifically, four Voluntary Sport Clubs (VSC) were examined to illustrate the reactions of these clubs to the presence of the three institutional mechanisms found within their environment. The sport delivery system in UK similarly uses gaming revenues to fund the sport organizations through a funding agency called Sport England. Garrett (2004) has used Oliver's (1991) piece of literature on the responses of organizations to institutional mechanisms to explain the findings, which contrast to the findings of this research. Garrett (2004) concluded from the findings that the VSC do not always conform to the demands of conditions or policies set out by the funding agency, and that those policies developed by the funding agency do not reflect the policies of the VSC.

However, in the research I conducted, I found this to be a different scenario in which all APSOs conformed to these policies and procedures of the ASRPWF, because

of a dependency on funding. For example, of the four VSCs sampled by Grarrett (2004), two of the clubs did not conform to the policies set out by the Sport England, and as a result, did not receive any funding. In contrast, the policies (i.e. 12 minimum criteria) developed by the ASRPWF are conformed to by all APSOs sampled for this study.

As I have previously stated in the Theoretical Framework Chapter, the similarities between the UK sport delivery system and Alberta's sport delivery system rest in the source of funding (i.e. gaming revenues); the VSCs and APSOs are both volunteer-based organizations, and there are criteria and reporting requirements that the organizations need to adhere to in order for them to receive funding. However, though similarities exist, it is apparent from the findings in this research, in comparison to the findings from Garrett's (2004) research, that organizations with similar characteristics in a similar environment will respond to the presence of institutional mechanisms differently.

The other study that was discussed in the Theoretical Framework chapter of this thesis was a quantitative study by Leiter (2005) which used institutional theory to describe change that occurred within Australia's nonprofit employment organizations. There were five conclusions discussed by Leiter (2005): 1) best practice can be associated with heterogeneity; 2) "variety means institutional expectations are not uniform and powerful" (p.27); 3) the less degree of pressure placed on a nonprofit organization for conformity, the easier it is for a nonprofit to be efficient; 4) as the amount of variety increases the "less bureaucratic and corporate hegemony" (p.27) there is with that nonprofit organization; and 5) "heterogeneity means responsiveness" (p.28).

The findings in this research differ from Leiter's (2005) finding in that I was unable to determine whether the APSOs within their organizational field have more

homogenous organizational features because of the presence of these institutional mechanisms. This is in comparison to heterogeneous organizational features and is discussed further below. The other major differences in the research are that Leiter's (2005) study used quantitative research methods and that Leiter (2005) examined Australia's nonprofit employment organizations. As a result, the different sample and method used in the two studies could be suggested as the reason for the different findings.

The Contribution of this Research to Institutional Theory and Sport Organizations

As previously indicated in this chapter, the APSOs that receive annual funding from the ASRPWF operate within a politically controlled environment. The ASRPWF Board is responsible for providing a report to the Community Development Minister regarding the APSO's operations and programs status. It is also important to remember that the ASRPWF is comprised of 10 politically appointed board members, where the members themselves are prominent business people within different Alberta communities. These members are chosen by the Lieutenant Governor, and all decisions are subject to the approval of the Community Development Minister.

Based on this understanding of the ASRPWF Board, I argue that the actions of the ASRPWF (i.e. developing policies and procedures) are politically driven to ensure that the ASRPWF continues to receive monies from the Community Development Ministry. The policies and procedures developed by the ASRPWF are likely to reflect the motivations of the Community Development Minister, because of the individuals that make up the ASRPWF Board and the fact that the Community Development Minister approves the policies and procedures developed by the ASRPWF Board. Furthermore, it

would be difficult to have any continuity in terms of developing policies and procedures from year to year based on the fact that the Community Development Minister is a politically appointed position that can change within a given electoral year. Based on this scenario the ASRWPF Board and Community Development Ministry have no incentive to push for the annual funding amounts to change for the APSOs, but rather only to maintain the current funding amounts and ensure that policies and procedures are adhered to by the APSOs.

Institutional theorists would suggest that the coercive pressures faced by APSOs have lead to the adoption of similar organizational characteristics by other APSOs in an attempt to have more legitimate operations and programs. By being perceived as legitimate, an organization is more likely to be supplied with monetary and non-monetary resources (Leiter, 2005; Suchman, 1995). For example, APSOs attempt to have legitimate operations and programs to maintain the current annual funding amount they receive by complying with the criteria and reporting requirements. However, it is apparent that those APSOs that receive the ADPG could already be deemed as legitimate, because not every APSO within the province of Alberta receives this grant. By establishing legitimate operations and programs, APSOs managers are seemingly trying to position the organization to make the argument to the ASRPWF Board that their organization is legitimate and deserves an increase in funding if there is ever an increase in the funding amounts for the APSOs receiving the ADPG. It is interesting to note, that while the possibility of an increase in funding exists, there has only been one increase since the implementation of the ADPG in late 1970s (SRB sport consultant, personal

communication, March 6, 2006), and it does not appear as though the funding amounts are going to change.

Following institutional theory (DiMaggio, 1983; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977), the ongoing presence of these institutional mechanisms identified in this study (coercive pressures, mimetic and normative mechanisms) is likely to result in APSOs becoming more homogenous within their organizational field (DiMaggio, 1983; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). However, the current research conducted for this study does not provide evidence to support this claim. A future direction for research is to observe if commonalties occur among APSOs over time because of the presence of these mechanisms, and to determine whether the APSOs have become more homogenous.

Another important factor to consider is that the ADPG funding amount for APSOs has only increased once since being implemented in the late 1970s. The initial funding amounts assessed for each APSO could have taken into account the economic environment during that time period into consideration. However, the economic environment has changed over the years, and there has only been one increase of 15% to the annual funding amounts (SRB sport consultant, personal communication, March 6, 2006), since the initial implementation of the ADPG.

Appendix J describes the current economic conditions in Alberta. I suggest that, because of this lack of change to funding, some APSOs will need to consider increasing their membership fees, decreasing the number of programs offered, or reduce the number of paid staff members employed with the organization. In addition, there will also likely be an increase in the amount of pressure placed on management within some APSOs to

discover other financial resources meaning that APSO managers will be focused on finding financial resources, rather than concentrating on providing services to the members of the APSO. This can be seen as a foreseeable problem for some APSOs in the upcoming future.

The research makes three contributions to the literature on institutional theory and sport organizations; first, the research has shown how the three institutional mechanisms are interlinked. The seminal piece by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) described the institutional mechanisms as three distinct concepts. However, within the context of this research, each institutional mechanism can be influenced or is created by another mechanism within a given organizational field. For example, the coercive pressure to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements in order to receive annual funding is linked with the presence of mimetic mechanisms. Geographic location and Brown Bag lunch seminars facilitate interaction between APSOs, which can then lead to relieving uncertainty regarding these mandatory requirements. Based on this fact, it has been determined that the coercive pressures faced by APSOs to comply with criteria and reporting requirements increases the interaction between APSOs, which then creates the link between coercive pressure and mimetic mechanisms. Second, the interaction resulting from offices existing in one location of an organization within an organizational field is a factor less prominent in the institutional theory literature. This research has described a scenario where having APSOs located at the Percy Page Centre has lead to the interaction between APSOs, which ultimately can result in APSOs adopting operational characteristics of other APSOs.

In addition, the three factors that emerged from the data are also interlinked. For example, the PPC was chosen as the host location for the initial Brown Bag lunch seminars. Hosting the seminar at the PPC makes it easier for those APSOs that have offices within the building to attend the seminar. It also facilitates communication, as indicated by the SRB manager between those organizations within the building. There is a connection to be drawn between the use of geographic location and the hosting of the Brown Bag lunch seminars to facilitate interaction between organizations. This understanding of how institutional mechanisms and factors are interlinked can contribute to our understanding of the relationships between institutional mechanisms.

In summary, the APSOs and ASRPWF operate within a politically controlled environment where the relationship that exists between the ASRPWF Board and the Community Development Minister seemingly influences the development of policies and procedures as it relates to funding. The pressure to comply with these policies and procedures by APSOs results in interaction between APSOs to relieve uncertainty and gain legitimacy. Through this legitimacy, an APSO manager positions his or her organization to receive an increase in annual funding. However, the reality of the situation is that annual funding amounts have only increased once since the late 1970's, which indicates it is highly unlikely that there will be an increase in the near future.

Based on this premise, I suggest that APSOs will have to begin to consider an increase in membership fees, a decrease in the number of programs offered to the members, or reduce the number of paid staff employed with the organization. There are two contributions that this research makes to the institutional theory literature and sport organizations: 1) institutional mechanisms are suggested to be interlinked; and 2) the

geographic location has emerged as a mimetic mechanism; a factor which is not as prominent in the institutional theory literature.

Summary

Institutional theory was chosen as the theoretical framework for developing an understanding regarding the institutional mechanisms present within the environment of Alberta's provincial sport organizations. Based on the data collected, institutional theory can be an appropriate theory to use when studying APSOs. These mechanisms stem from the factors identified in the Results chapter (i.e. criteria and reporting requirements, geographic location, and Brown Bag lunch seminars).

Each mechanism was discussed individually in reference to these factors throughout this chapter. Through the identification of these mechanisms, I have made suggestions as to the practical and theoretical implications of this research, which has been discussed in this chapter and has resulted from the findings of this research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis based its research on the annual funding arrangements between Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations (APSOs) and the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks & Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF), and sought to identify and explore the factors that generate coercive pressures, mimetic and normative mechanisms within the population of APSOs. Four research questions were addressed:

- What factors related to the ASRPWF funding arrangement can lead to the presence of institutional mechanisms in an APSO's environment?
- Which specific institutional mechanisms are created by the ASRPWF?
- How do the APSOs respond to the presence of these institutional mechanisms?
- What are the practical and theoretical contributions of identifying the presence of institutional mechanisms within an APSO's environment?

Based on the data collected from APSO management, a SRB Manager and a SRB Sport Consultant, two factors were identified contributing to the existence of the institutional mechanisms within an APSO's environment: the criteria and reporting requirements imposed by the ASRPWF and the geographic location of APSOs. In addition, the Brown Bag lunch seminars implemented by the SRB were identified as an emerging factor. This thesis' first research question addresses these factors.

The answer to the second research question (i.e. which specific institutional mechanisms are created by the ASRPWF?) is that all the institutional mechanisms are present as a result of the ASRPWF funding that is received by APSOs. The coercive pressure felt by APSOs can be attributed to the criteria and reporting requirements, and

mimetic and normative mechanisms are created from the geographic location of the APSOs and, potentially, the Brown Bag lunch seminars.

The response to the presence of these institutional mechanisms was acquiescence; more specifically, compliance and imitation. The findings indicated that the coercive pressure to comply with the criteria and reporting requirements leads to an increase in the amount of interaction between APSOs. This interaction is facilitated by close geographic location of APSOs' offices, and, potentially, the implementation of Brown Bag lunch seminars. These two factors are APSOs attempts to relieve uncertainty regarding the criteria and reporting requirements by copying or adopting similar operational and program characteristics to meet these requirements; this is the basic premise behind describing a mimetic mechanism. Thus, based on these findings, the coercive pressures associated with criteria and reporting requirements have been found to be the catalyst for creating mimetic mechanisms.

This research makes practical and theoretical contributions to the literature. The practical implications (as discussed in chapter five) are that, because APSOs operate within a politically controlled environment, the funding policies and procedures developed by the ASRPWF influence the operations and programs of APSOs. Furthermore, I also suggested that APSOs are continually trying to establish legitimacy with the hope they will receive an increase in funding. However, the reality of the situation is that the annual funding amounts have only increased once since the initial assessment was made in the late 1970s to determine the amount of funding the APSOs receive. I suggested that, because of this, APSOs will have to begin to consider

increasing their membership fees, decreasing the number of programs offered to the members, or reduce the number of paid staff that are employed with the organization.

The second contribution this research makes is to the literature on institutional theory and sport organizations. There are two contributions this research makes: 1) institutional mechanisms are suggested to be interlinked; and 2) the geographic location and the proximity of organizations has emerged as a mimetic mechanism. By describing these implications, I have answered the final research question I posed. As well, throughout the research process, new questions emerged that were not addressed in this thesis. These questions will be discussed below.

Future Directions for Research

Future research into provincial amateur sport organizations could be used to explore a number of different areas. Future research could be conducted to investigate the reason there is a lack of knowledge in regard to understanding the source of funding, which stems from gaming revenues. Other research could consider investigating if, over time, the presence of the three institutional mechanisms creates a homogenous population of APSOs. In addition, future research on Provincial Sport Organizations in other provinces across Canada can be conducted to see whether similar institutional mechanisms are present, or are these mechanisms isolated to Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations field.

A final area of research to consider would be the relationship between the community club level teams associated with the APSOs, and how this relationship

influences on the operations and programs of an APSO. Such research has the potential to contribute to both academia and practitioners working in the organizational field.

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APPENDIX A

78 Provincial Sport Organizations of Alberta (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-g)

Alberta Alpine	Alberta Amputee Sport & Recreation Association	Alberta Fencing Association	Alberta Schools' Athletic Association
Alberta Bowhunters and Archers Association	Athletics Alberta	Alberta Equestrian Federation	Alberta Federation of Shooting Sports
Badminton Alberta	Alberta Amateur Baseball Council	Field Hockey Alberta	Alberta Soaring Council
Basketball Alberta	Alberta Baton Twirling Association	Skate Canada-Alberta-Northwest Territories/Nunavut Section	Alberta Amateur Softball Association
Biathlon Alberta	Alberta Bicycle Association	Football Alberta	Alberta Amateur Speed Skating Association
Alberta Sports and Recreation Association for the Blind	Alberta Bobsleigh	Alberta Golf Association	Alberta Sport Parachuting Association
Bowling Federation of Alberta	Alberta Amateur Boxing Association	Darts Alberta	Swim Alberta
Alberta Broomball Association	Alberta Recreational Canoe Association	Alberta Freestyle Skiing Association	Alberta Table Tennis Association
Alberta Sprint Racing Canoe Association	Alberta Whitewater Association	Alberta Gymnastics Federation	Alberta Team Handball Federation
Alberta Cricket Association	Alberta Colleges Athletic Conference	Hockey Alberta	Alberta Triathlon Association
Alberta Curling Federation	Cross Country Alberta	Judo Alberta	Alberta Volleyball Association
Disabled Skiers Alberta	Alberta Deaf Sports Association	Alberta Lacrosse Association	Water Ski and Wakeboard Alberta
Alberta Cerebral Palsy Sport Association	Canadian Amateur Diving Association – Alberta Section	Alberta Luge Association	Alberta Amateur Wrestling Association
Alberta Horseshoe Pitchers	Alberta Orienteering Association	Alberta Racquetball Association	KidSport Alberta
Karate Alberta Association	Alberta Rhythmic Sportive Gymnastics Federation	Ringette Alberta	InMotion Network
Lawn Bowls Association of Alberta	Alberta Rowing Association	Alberta Rugby Union	Synchro Alberta Association
Alberta Ski Jumping and Nordic Combined	Alberta Sailing Association	Alberta Special Olympics	Alberta Tae Kwon Do Association

Association			
Alberta Soccer Association	Alberta Senior Citizens Sport and Recreation Association	Sport Medicine Council of Alberta	Tennis Alberta
Alberta Water Polo Association	Wheelchair Sports Alberta	Squash Alberta	Alberta Universities Athletic Association
Alberta Weightlifting Association	Alberta Snowboarding		

APPENDIX B

Historical Context and Structural Overview of the Gaming Industry in Alberta

History of Gaming

Gaming has been legalized in Canada for more than a century (Smith, Pitter, & Williams, 1987), dating back to 1892 when the *Criminal Code of Canada* was amended to allow for legalized gambling to occur if the profits were used for charitable purposes (i.e. fundraisers to fight diseases such as AIDS and cancer, or to assist homeless people). Gaming activities were under the control of the Federal Government from 1892 to 1969, in 1969, the *Criminal Code of Canada* was amended to authorize provincial governments to license and operate their own lotteries and casinos within their province (Alberta Government, n.date-d). This amendment was just the beginning; it would not be for another ten years that exclusive authority was transferred from the federal government to the provincial governments (Alberta Government, n.date).

In 1979, there was a full transfer of gaming control to provincial governments with regard to lotteries (i.e. VLTs, lottery tickets, and slot machines). As a result, provincial governments (i.e. Alberta's Provincial Government) have the right to control all aspects of gaming, including the revenue generated from the lotteries within their own province. The control of gaming given to the province is described in current national legislation on gaming: sections 207 (1) a, b, c, and d of the *Criminal Code of Canada* (Department of Justice Canada, n.date). Sections 207 (1) a, b, c, and d outline the "provisions that the provinces have been delegated exclusive authority to operate and/or license particular forms of gambling" (Campbell, Hartnagel, & Smith, 2005, p.19). The specific legislation for gaming in Alberta can be found within the Alberta Gaming and

Liquor Act, which describes the laws enforced to govern gaming and liquor activities in the province (James, 2003). In addition to the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Act, in 1985 there was a government lottery review concerned with the disbursement of unused revenue stemming from the lottery revenue generated in Alberta (Alberta Government, n.date-d).

This review led to the passing of Bill 10 in 1989 by the government of Alberta, established the Alberta Lottery Fund (ALF or Fund). The passing of Bill 10 was the Provincial Government's response to unused lottery revenues. Through this legislation, the Government of Alberta collects and places the lottery revenue into the ALF, from which a portion is distributed to the various Government Ministries of Alberta (Alberta Government, April 13, 2005). A ministry is a governmental department presided over by a government minister, and which focuses on providing services to specific aspects of society (e.g. transportation, agriculture, health care, and community). Each ministry must present their budget to the provincial legislature, in which the budget is either passed or rejected through a vote by the members of the provincial government. The approved budget determines the amount of annual funding available for an APSO.

In 1996, the Alberta Liquor Control Board, Alberta Lotteries, the Alberta Gaming Commission, Alberta Lotteries and Gaming, and the Gaming Control Branch merged together to form the enterprise known as the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission (AGLC). It was also in 1996 that the Alberta Government redirected control over gaming activities from themselves to the AGLC. It is important to note that, while the AGLC is supposedly at arm's length from the Government of Alberta, the Government of Alberta

controls the AGLC and requires them to report to the government regarding gaming and liquor activities within the province. The AGLC is comprised of:

> A Board and a Corporation. The Corporation[14] acts as the operational arm of the organization, while the Board is responsible for policy and regulatory matters. The AGLC ensures that gaming and liquor activities in Alberta are conducted honestly, openly, and with the highest level of integrity. The AGLC also endeavors to maximize the economic benefits of gaming and liquor activities in the province to the benefit of Albertans. (Alberta Government, April 13, 2005, p.1)

Furthermore, through the AGLC and the Ministry of Gaming, revenues from the lotteries are administered to government-funded ministries and programs (Alberta Government, April 13, 2005).

In 1996, by establishing the AGLC, the Government of Alberta moved away from a directing approach in regard to gaming and liquor activities to a more facilitative approach (Pitter, 1996). For the ministries, this means the Government of Alberta is concentrating its efforts on providing assistance (i.e. financial assistance), while the control, distribution, and monitoring of ALF funding is the responsibility of the AGLC. Currently, the financial support the Government of Alberta provides through the AGLC remains a vital and primary source of funding used by the government ministries.

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[14] A corporation is an artificial entity with the power to make legal decisions and enact procedures, and is a separate legal entity from its members (Pride et al., 1999). For example, the AGLC is a corporation that is a separate entity from the government of Alberta and the board, but has the power to control all the gaming and liquor activities in the province of Alberta. The corporation ensures procedures and policies developed by the board are followed through by the organizations or, in the context of this study, the ministries in order to receive funding.

Through this financial support, ministries are able to provide further financial assistance to organizations such as APSOs.

Structural Overview of the Gaming Industry in Alberta

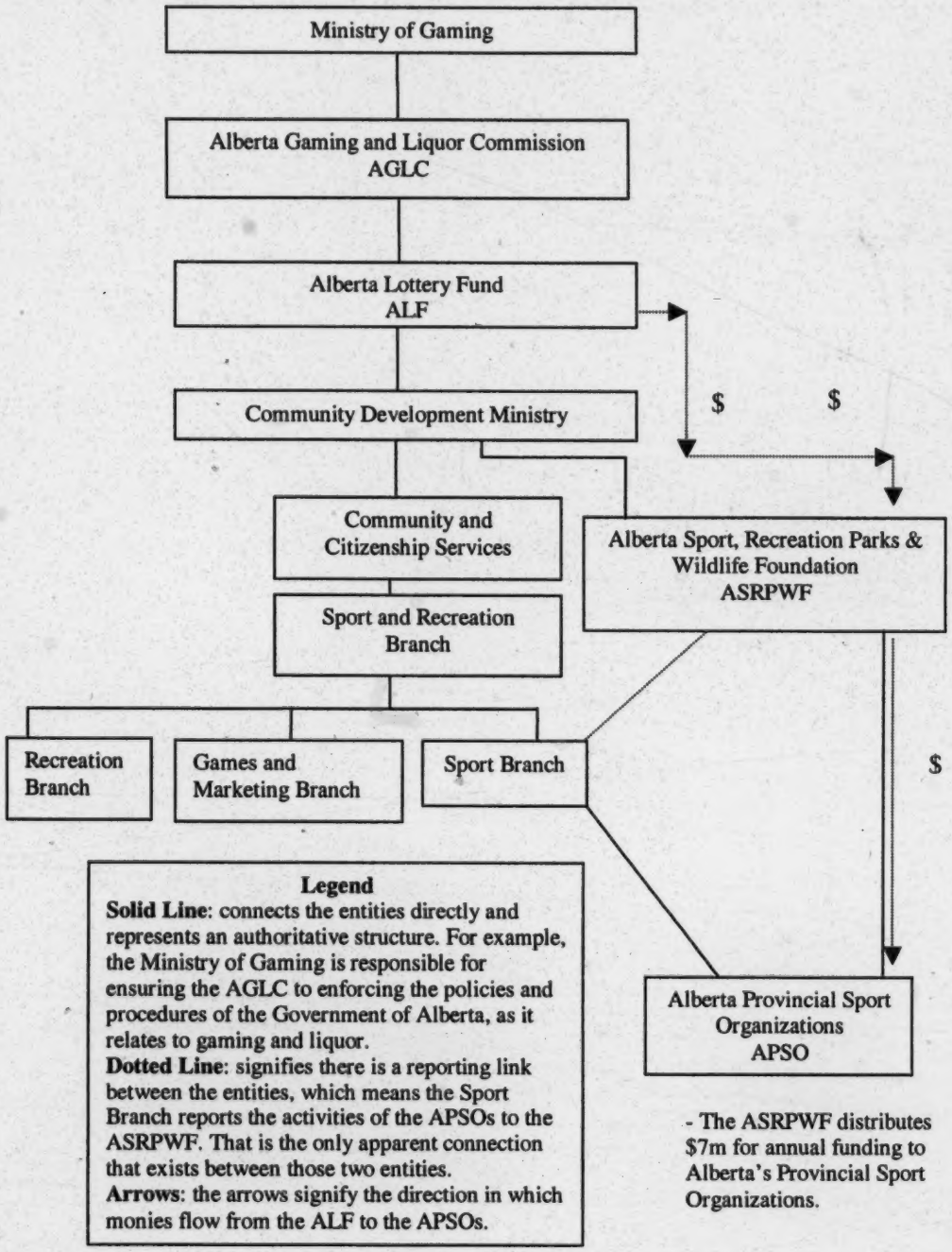
The Ministry of Gaming represents the Government of Alberta and is responsible for administering gaming and liquor activities in the province of Alberta. Furthermore, this ministry distributes the revenues accumulated from gaming and lottery activities to APSOs through a complex process (see Figure B1). The Ministry of Gaming comprises of the AGLC, the Department of Gaming, the Community Lottery Program Secretariat, and the Alberta Gaming Research Council. Honorable Gordon Graydon, the Minister of Gaming, is responsible for supervising the enforcement of the Gaming and Liquor Act through the AGLC (Alberta Government, n.date).

In addition, another responsibility of the AGLC includes the distribution of gaming revenues from the ALF to 14 different government ministries; for example, the Community Development Ministry received $99.5 million from the ALF in 2005 – a sum which is voted on by the members of the Alberta legislature (Alberta Government, n.date-a). The mission of the Community Development Ministry is "to support community development, and through leadership, protection and partnership, help all Albertans participate fully in the social, cultural and economic life of the province" (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-e, p.1). The Community Development Ministry allots a portion of the money received from the ALF to provide

financial support for the operations and programs of APSOs, and is one source of gaming revenue to which APSOs are able access[15] (see Figure B1).

[15] The APSOs also have access to charity gaming revenues that come from bingos, casinos, raffles and 50/50 draws should the APSOs choose to get a license to run these events.

FIGURE B1. *A Flow Chart of Funding from the Minister of Gaming to Alberta's Sport Organizations (Edwards, Reade, Mason, Smith & Thibault, 2005).*


Ministry of Gaming
Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission
AGLC
Alberta Lottery Fund
ALF
$
$
Community Development Ministry
Community and
Citizenship Services
Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks &
Wildlife Foundation
ASRPWF
Sport and Recreation
Branch
Recreation
Branch
Games and
Marketing Branch
Sport Branch
$
Alberta Provincial Sport
Organizations
APSO
Legend
Solid Line: connects the entities directly and represents an authoritative structure. For example, the Ministry of Gaming is responsible for ensuring the AGLC to enforcing the policies and procedures of the Government of Alberta, as it relates to gaming and liquor.
Dotted Line: signifies there is a reporting link between the entities, which means the Sport Branch reports the activities of the APSOs to the ASRPWF. That is the only apparent connection that exists between those two entities.
Arrows: the arrows signify the direction in which monies flow from the ALF to the APSOs.
- The ASRPWF distributes $7m for annual funding to Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations.

Sport is just one of the responsibilities of the Community Development Ministry; other areas of responsibility include the Cultural Facilities and Historical Resources Division, Parks and Protected Areas, Ministry Support Services, the Francophone Secretariat, and the Community and Citizenship Services Division. While all areas are important, the most critical to this research is the Community and Citizenship Services Division, which is responsible for monitoring provincial amateur sports. The Community and Citizenship Services Division is divided into four branches: Libraries; Community and Voluntary Sector Services; Arts Development; Human Rights and Citizenship, and the Sport and Recreation Branch. In addition, Community Development is also directly responsible for five foundations, one of which is the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks & Wildlife Foundation (ASRPWF).

In 1984, the Alberta Sport Council was established (Pitter, 1996). Ten years later on July 1, 1994, the Alberta Sport Council merged with the Alberta Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation to form what is now known as the Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date). The ASRPWF is a Crown corporation; Crown corporations are "government-owned corporations that are, ostensibly, at arms length from government control" (Campbell et al., 2005, p.23).

There are two primary reasons the Government of Alberta has created a Crown corporation to allocate funds to nonprofit organizations (i.e. APSOs). First, the Government of Alberta's procedures regulating the distribution of gaming revenues require gaming funds to be allocated to nonprofit Crown corporations, but not to internal government departments (Pitter, 1996). The second reason for having a Crown

corporation as the organization for distributing gaming revenues is that this organization can now "secure funding using a variety of sources and means: corporate donations, corporate sponsorships, gifts in kind, and, most significantly, tax-deductible donations" (Pitter, 1996, p.46). Tax-deductible donations can only be made to sport through a Crown corporation because the donation is considered to be a gift to the government (Pitter, 1996).

The Community Development Ministry authorizes and controls this Crown corporation and, through the ASRPWF, a portion of the ALF funding is administered to the APSOs. The ASPRWF is comprised of a board that consists of 10 politically appointed members (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-c). The Lieutenant Governor makes the appointments to the ASRPWF Board as outlined in the Foundation Act, and all decisions made by the ASRPWF Board are subject to the approval of the Community Development Minister.

Furthermore, the ASRPWF is source of financial support as described in the Ministry Overview:

> The Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation supports the development of recreation, sport, parks, and wildlife activities in the province by recommending, to the Minister of Community Development, grant assistance to provincial recreation and sport organizations. The foundation sponsors major games, supports the development of active lifestyles and receives donations in support of land conservation and other programs. (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-e, p.1)

There are five objectives of the ASRPWF outlined in the Foundation Act, which include developing and maintaining: 1) sport programs, facilities, and services; 2) recreation programs, facilities, and services; 3) parks programs, facilities, and services; 4) fish and wildlife programs, facilities, and services; and 5) to raise funds to be used in assisting the ASRPWF in carrying out its objectives (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-c, p.1). The first objective one of the Foundation Act is the objective with the most significance in the context of this thesis research.

The ASRPWF received $17.7 million of the Community Development Ministry's $99.5 million in 2005 (Alberta Government, n.date-a) to financially support 77 APSOs (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-g). All APSOs choose whether or not they would like to receive ASRPWF funding; however, funding is contingent on the approval of the ASRPWF Board and the availability of funds received from the Community Development Ministry. To obtain funding APSOs must go through a grant application process developed by the Sport and Recreation Branch (SRB sport consultant, personal communication, March 6, 2006).

The SRB comprises government employees who report to the ASRPWF Board and the Community Development Minister. The SRB are responsible for implementing the policies of the ASRPWF, while also being responsible for reporting and facilitating the requests of Community Development Ministry. There are three major departments under the supervision of the SRB: 1) Recreation; 2) Games and Marketing; and 3) the Sport Department. The Sport Department is responsible for allocating annual funding to the APSOs. Some staffing positions in the Sport Department include sport consultant, sport manager, and executive director.

Sport consultants are provided with a portfolio that includes a group of APSOs they are in charge; their job is to ensure through a reporting process, funding is being used. This reporting process requires the APSOs to submit, for the sport consultants review, a business plan, post program analysis, audited financial statements, an application form, and a provincial sport association questionnaire. In addition, the sport consultants are required to conduct an interview with APSO management or executive board members and express any concerns regarding the review of the documents submitted by the APSOs. The reporting process must be completed by the APSOs to maintain the annual funding that they receive.

That is just one aspect of a sport consultant's responsibility; other responsibilities include providing information regarding funding opportunities to their group of APSOs, being the communication link between the government and the APSOs, and, in most cases, leading a program offered by the ASRPWF. A program can come in the form of different grants for APSOs, assistance in organizing multi-sport games (e.g. Canada Games, or Western Games), and facility enhancement. The manager of the SRB supervises the sport consultants and reports their progress to the executive director. All departments within the SRB report to the executive director, who then has the responsibility of reporting information to the ASRPWF board, as well as the Community Development Minister (SRB manager, personal communication, March 17, 2006). In addition, the role of the staff members within the SRB provides an understanding for the means in which APSOs are required to report to receive annual funding.

Types of Grants

There are five different types of grants supplied by the ASRPWF, and which APSOs can apply for: the Coaching Development Initiative; Development Initiatives Program; Hosting Program; Sport Participation Initiative Program; and the Associations Development Program Grant (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-d). The Coaching Development Initiatives grant provides an opportunity for APSO coaches to further develop coaching skills within their specific sport through educational programs. The National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) is just one example of a type of educational program offered by an APSO. The second type of grant is the Development Initiatives Program grant, which is intended to provide "support for project and program related endeavors to Albertans working in the areas of sport, recreation, parks and wildlife" (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-b, p.1). The Hosting Program grant promotes Alberta's sports, recreation, parks, and wildlife programs through the hosting of major events in communities in order to generate economic benefits to the community. The amount of funding for the Hosting Program grant is based on the level of the event, which can be described as International, National, Provincial, Municipal, Non-sporting events, Sporting events, and Western Provinces competitions. The Sport Participation Initiatives Program grant is the fourth type of grant offered by the ASRPWF and provides APSOs with the financial support to develop and operate programs targeted at under-represented groups (i.e. girls and women, Aboriginals, and economically disadvantaged people).

The final type of grant is the Association Development Program Grant (ADPG), which is provided annually to APSOs for use for operations and programs. This grant is a

consistent source of revenue, is the only type of annual financial support that APSOs received from the Provincial Government, and, for most APSOs, is a primary source of funding (Reade, Edwards, Mason, Smith, & Thibault, 2004). The impact of the ADPG on APSOs will be a focus of this research.

There are twelve criteria as a minimum standard to be met by each APSO before receiving this grant (see Figure B2). This criteria is used to determine the initial amount of funding an APSO will receive from the ADPG; once this initial funding has been allocated, the APSO will continue to receive that same amount annually (Edwards et al., 2004). Throughout the history of this grant, which dates back to the late 1970s, there has been virtually no increase to funding for the APSOs, with the exception of a 15% increase for all APSOs in 2003 (SRB sport consultant, personal communication, March 6, 2006). In 2003, the SRB sport consultants divided $7 million among the different APSOs for the ADPG (SRB sport consultant, Personal Communication, March 6, 2006). The amount provided by the grant to individual APSOs ranges from $6,500 to $222, 600. Each APSO receives a different amount of funding in comparison to other APSOs, and no two APSOs receive the same amount. This suggests the ASRPWF has recognized the diversity within the population of APSOs, and for this reason individually determine the amount of funding that each APSO receives.

FIGURE B2. *Criteria for the Associations Development Program Grant (Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation, 2003).*

Association Funding Eligibility Criteria

In order for Provincial Associations to be eligible for funding through the Association Development Program of the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation (Foundation), the following minimum criteria must be met:

1) The Associations must be incorporated under appropriate Alberta Legislation for a minimum of three (3) years prior to seeking financial support through the Foundation's Association Development Program.
2) The Association must acknowledge in its business plan and demonstrate that its activity in the Province of Alberta recognizes and contributes to the mission, goals and principles of the Foundation.
3) The Association must declare in its bylaws, and demonstrate through its activities, that its services are provincial in nature and scope without duplication in services; that it provides participant and leadership opportunities for all Albertans.
4) The Association must have a minimum of 500 individual members or have 5 members-clubs with a minimum total membership of 500 individuals with those clubs.

Note: Associations that are excluded from this criterion are provincial sport or recreation associations for disabled Albertans.

5) The Association must be volunteer driven.
6) Foundation assistance shall not exceed 50% of the Association's overall operating budget (total operating expenses) with the intent of the association moving toward self-sufficiency.
7) The Association must submit (for review purposes only) a 1-year Business Plan that demonstrates that it has an ongoing planning and evaluation process in place. The Association must also submit (for review purposes only) a post program analysis that measures the results, achievements and financial impact of the pervious years operations.
8) On an annual basis the Association must submit for the Foundations records:

- The Foundation's form of application for funding, and
- Financial statements indicative of the Associations activities, as endorsed by the general membership of the Association (as required by the Alberta Socities Act), and as prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.

9) The Association must demonstrate how it will communicate regularly with its membership.
10) The Association must comply with all regulations and any applicable Alberta Legislation.
11) The Association must demonstrate that it complies with National Leadership Standards such as those exemplified in the National Coaching Certification Program.

Important Note: Meeting all the above Funding Eligibility Criteria does not guarantee funding.

Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations

There are 78 APSOs recognized by the Community Development Ministry; and 77 of those organizations annually receive the ADPG from the ASRPWF (Alberta Community Development Ministry, n.date-g). APSOs are operationally different in comparison to one another in terms of their size, mission, vision, goals, sport focus, and competition level. For example, while one organization's goal may be to host events that facilitate an elite athlete's progress to a national level of competition, another organization may host similar events for the purpose of providing participation opportunities and increasing the exposure of the sport to the communities throughout Alberta.

Summary

In summary, Alberta's Provincial Sport Organizations operate within a complex funding structure with a number of actors that include: the Government of Alberta; the Community Development Ministry; Alberta Sport, Recreation Parks and Wildlife Foundation; and the Alberta Provincial Sport Organization. The Government of Alberta dictates the amount of funding each ministry receives. Ministries such as the Community Development Ministry receive their funding from the Alberta Lottery Fund, which is distributed to a number of different agencies that fall under the responsibility of the Community Development Ministry. One of those agencies is a funding agency, the ASRPWF, which administers funding to APSOs on behalf of the Community Development Ministry.

APPENDIX C

APSO Interview Guide

Personal Questions:

1. How long have you been working for the organization?
2. Prior to working for the organization, where was your previous employment?
3. How long did you work at your previous employment?
4. Do you have a post secondary background?

Organization Questions:

5. Can you speak to some background information about your organization (i.e. mission, values, goals, and strategic plans)?
6. What are some of the programs that your organization offer to its members?
7. Is there an NSO (National Sporting Organization) associated with your organization?
8. If there is a NSO associated with your organizations how do they provide support, and what kind of relationship accompanies that association?
9. Provide an example of some of the types of changes that have occurred to the operations, structure, and programs of your organizations within the last five years and some reasons for these changes?
10. Do you communicate and interact with other APSOs?
11. Why is your organization not located at the Percy Page Centre (for Organizations 2, 6, and 8 only)?

(We are now going to move to questions regarding a human resource aspect of your organization)

12. Do you see a lot of change or turnover in your organization's staff?
13. Discuss some of the employment opportunities that have been presented in your organization within the last five years?
14. Has there been any opportunity to move to another APSO?
15. Have you ever hired anyone in your organization?
16. When you were hiring these people, were you looking for a lot of post-secondary background, or was it more about the experiences in sport or linking it to sport?
17. Did you ever take interns?
18. Is there specific qualifications that you look for in an intern?

(Moving on now to the ASRPWF funding that you receive)

19. How familiar are you with the source of the ASRPWF's funding?
20. Is the annual funding that you receive the primary source of funding?
21. If so, what percentage does it make up of your revenues?

22. Do you use your annual funding for something specific, or does it just go into a general account?
23. Describe a request from the ASRPWF that has impacted your organization.
24. Do you communicate often with the SRB staff?
25. What other types of gaming revenues to you use (i.e. casinos, bingos, or raffles)?
26. Have you ever applied for any other types of grants (i.e. hosting grant)?
27. What are some other sources of revenue for your organization?
28. Have you recognized any criteria change to the Associations Development Program Grant over the past five years?
29. Are you concerned with how much annual funding your organization is currently receiving?
30. Do your participants know that the organization is being funded by gaming revenues and, if so, do they care?

(We are now going to move on to the reporting requirements that are implemented by the ASRPWF)

31. What is the reporting process for your organization to the ASRPWF?
32. How often are consultations or audits conducted by the ASRPWF?
33. In your annual interviews with the Sport and Recreation Branch sport consultants, do the sport consultants provide recommendations?
34. What are your general feelings about the provincial sport association questionnaire?
35. Does the information reported to the ASRPWF ever get used in reference to your report in the next interview?
36. What are your general feeling about the whole process?

(Conclusion)

37. If you could change one thing about the annual funding that you receive from the ASRPWF, what would it be and why?
38. Is there anything that you would like add or comment on regarding the interview, the study, or the ASRPWF?

APPENDIX D

ASRPWF Interview Guide

Personal Questions:

1. How long have you been working for the organization?
2. Prior to working for the organization, where was your previous employment?
3. How long did you work at your previous employment?
4. Do you have a post secondary background?

Organization Questions:

5. Can you speak to some background information about your organization (i.e. mission, values, goals, and strategic plans)?
6. Is there an NSO (National Sporting Organization) associated with your organization?
7. If there is a NSO associated with your organizations, how do they provide support, and what kind of relationship accompanies that association?
8. How do you determine how to classify a provincial sport organization?
9. Are there any other sources of revenue for your organization?
10. Provide an example of some of the types of changes that have occurred to the operations, structure, and programs of your organizations within the last five years and the some reasons for these changes?
11. Do you communicate and interact with other foundations?

(We are now going to move to questions regarding the human resource aspect of your organization)

12. In terms of the human resource side, you are the manager of the sport consultants. Have you seen a lot of turnover with sport consultants?
13. What do you look for when hiring an individual to work at the Sport and Recreation Branch?
14. Do you ever take interns?
15. Are there specific qualifications that you look for in an intern?

(Moving on now to the ASRPWF funding)

16. What is the reporting structure of the Sport and Recreation Branch?
17. Do you find that there is ever conflict between the Foundation board and the government or the Minister?
18. How do you determine what sport consultant goes with which groups? Is it a rotating system?
19. How do you apply to that? Do you apply to that through the Community Development Ministry, or do you apply for that directly to Gaming?

20. Give an example of a request that you have made of an APSO that has impacted the funding of that organization? How did that organization respond?
21. What are the policy requirements for the Associations Development Grant?
22. What is the ASRPWF grant funding based on?
23. How is it determined?
24. How would you describe your relationship with the APSOs that you fund?
25. How do you determine the policies that are to be implemented for grant funding?
26. What is the reporting process for APSOs?
27. How do you monitor the organizations?
28. What role does the Provincial Sport Association Questionnaire play in monitoring?
29. Is performance a measurement tool?
30. Describe what you are looking for in efficient and effective organization.
31. How often are you in communication with the organizations?
32. How many people work in your organization?
33. How do you deal with problems that APSOs face?
34. Describe what you foresee with the relationship between the APSOs and the ASRPWF?

APPENDIX E

Coercive Isomorphism Matrix

Type of Mechanism: Coercive Isomorphism

Characteristic Features	Coercive Isomorphism
Government Motivations	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Policies	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Funding	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Subordinate to the Government	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Criteria and Reporting Requirements	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Accountability	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Other Grants	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
National Sporting Bodies	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Membership	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*

APPENDIX F

Mimetic Isomorphism Matrix

Type of Mechanism: Mimetic Isomorphism

Characteristic Features	**Mimetic Isomorphism**
Goal Ambiguity	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Change that occurs	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Sharing features between organizations	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Geographic Location	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Brown Bag Lunch Seminar	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*

APPENDIX G

Normative Isomorphism Matrix

Type of Mechanism: Normative Isomorphism

Characteristic Features	**Normative Isomorphism**
Auditing Features	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Experiences in Sport	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Academic Experiences	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Pervious work experiences	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Professional Staff	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Geographic Location	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*
Brown Bag Lunch Seminar	*Quotes from APSOs, Sport and Recreation Branch, and information that stems from websites and documents inserted here*

APPENDIX H

Leiter's (2005) Factors Thought to Induce Isomorphism

Leiter (2005) discussed factors considered to induce the three institutional mechanisms (i.e. coercive pressure, mimetic, and normative mechanisms). Government motivations, subordinates to the government, funding, and supplier or client concentration are factors that Leiter (2005) considered to induce coercive pressures. Leiter (2005) defined the term government motivation as stemming from government representation of the general population; through this representation, the government is pressured by the citizens of the state to ensure that funding provided to nonprofit organizations is being used. These motivations are transferred to the subordinates of the government (i.e. funding agency, and governmental departments) and, through the subordinate, actions are implemented to reach the goals of the government by the nonprofit organizations. This can lead to pressure being placed on a nonprofit organization to help produce results that satisfy the goals of the funding agency and, ultimately, the government. The financial support provided by the subordinate of the government can be used as a means to dictate a nonprofit organization's operations and programs to reflect the government's motivations. By stipulating expectations and conditions, both subordinates of the government and the government are setting a standard for nonprofits to meet, and they use the funding amounts to persuade the nonprofit organizations to adhere to these standards. Funding therefore can be increased, decreased, or revoked based on the nonprofit organization's compliance to the standards. Funding thus plays a primary role in inducing isomorphism through the manipulation of power that the funding agency has over the nonprofit organization. This manipulation

forces the nonprofit organization to meet the demands and requests of the funding agency. The final factor inducing coercive isomorphic pressure is supplier or client concentration. Leiter (2005) explained, "If the nonprofit organization faces one vendor or one client that accounts for a large part of its supply or demand, it may need to comply with requirements of that vendor or client" (p.13). Leiter (2005) identified another type of factor: union power. However, for the purpose of this study union power is not applicable because there is no union involvement within the APSOs' organizational field.

There are four factors that Leiter (2005) thought to induce mimetic mechanisms: 1) goal ambiguity; 2) change; 3) sharing features; and 4) decline in performance. Goal ambiguity occurs when nonprofit organizations are uncertain about their own organizational goals. They then look to other successful nonprofit organizations and adopt similar goals in order to obtain legitimacy. Change is considered to be a factor because, "Change itself may cause uncertainty and motivate the search for alternative sources" (Leiter, 2005, p.13). Change to nonprofit organizations can include: operations features, policies, structuring, and programs. The third factor thought to induce mimetic mechanisms is sharing features. Sharing features exists when there is a sharing of ideas, decisions, operational components of the organizations, and programs between members of the organization. Sharing between nonprofit organizations produces borderless boundaries for working within a highly competitive organizational field. The final factor is a decline in performance, which can be a motivation for nonprofit organizations to search for legitimacy status elsewhere (Leiter, 2005).

Two factors Leiter (2005) thought to induce normative mechanisms are: 1) auditing features; and 2) the manager's education. Leiter (2005) described auditing

features as professionals who audit nonprofit organizations; their role is to identify problems and provide recommendations to the nonprofit organization to make improvements. Based on the fact that auditing occurs for each organization within the organizational field, the similarities between recommendations with the organizations could increase; this suggests that there will be a homogenous population of organizations. Furthermore, academic experiences are associated with an individual's academic background (university or college). This background incorporates specialized training that the individual has received, which can include such areas as: sport management, marketing, accounting, economics, and management.

APPENDIX I

List of Brown Bag Lunch Seminars (SRB manager, personal communication, September 8, 2006)

April - Police Records Checks (Edmonton)

April - Engaging & Retaining Volunteers (Calgary)

May – Lottery Funding Programs (Edmonton & Calgary)

June – Insurance & Risk Management (Edmonton & Calgary)

July - *No seminars held*

August - *No seminars held*

September – Good Accounting Practices Make Cents (Edmonton)

September – Police Records Checks (Calgary)

APPENDIX J

An Overview of the Economic Conditions in Alberta

Since 1988, Alberta's population has increased 35% (Sport Alberta, n.date), and Alberta's economy has been the strongest in Canada since 1996 years with a 4.3% estimated increase in 2005 (Alberta Government, n.date-b). Alberta has been experiencing an economic boom (Alberta Government, n.date-c), with a budget surplus of $4.1 billion in 2006 and an unemployment rate of 3.9% in 2005 (Alberta Government, n.date-b).

The economy in relation to sport in the province of Alberta provides an important contribution (Alberta Community Development Ministry, 2003). In 2005, the average Albertan family was spent $2,136 on sport, which added $1.32 billion to the annual economy (Sport Alberta, n.date). With low unemployment rates, a budget surplus of over a billion dollars, and an expected $1.2 billion generated by gaming in 2006, the possibility of the Government of Alberta increasing the amount of funding that the Community Development Ministry's budget is unlikely. An increase in ASRPWF funding could be applied to an increase in the APSOs' annual funding amount. However, this is not the case and the APSOs have not seen a significant increase in their funding for a number of years.